



*The Christian live to day as if he should ne're see to morrow
Saith Tertul . . .*

Memento Mori :

**O R,
MEDITATIONS
ON
DEATH.**

By the Lady **NORTON.**

DEUT. XXXII. 29.

*O that they were wise, that they would understand this,
that they would consider their Latter End.*

LONDON:

Printed for John Graves, at the Bible in Salisbury-Street in the Strand.
MDCCV.

Alimento Mors:

O R
MEDITATIONS
ON
DEATH

By the LADY NORTON.

DEUT. XXXII. 22.

O that they were wise that they would understand this
that they would receive the latter End.



LONDON:

Printed for John Gordon, at the Sign of the Three Kings in the Strand.
MDCCLXXII.

The English Dictionary

To the Honourable

Elizabeth Hambleton.

Dear Madam,

I Am about treating Your Ladyship as a Roman Gentleman did St. *Austin* and his Mother : I shall entertain you in a Chamber-house, and carry your Meditation a while into the Chamber of Death, where you shall find the Room dressed up with Melancholick Acts, and fit to converse with your most Serious Thoughts; which begins with a Sight, and proceeds in a Deep Consideration, and ends in a Holy Resolution. The Sight which St. *Austin* most noted in that House of Sorrow, was the Body of *Cesar* cloathed with

The Epistle Dedicatory

all the Dishonours of Corruption that you can suppose in Six Months Burial.

Dear Madam, Both Your Ladyship and my Self have lately seen and felt such Sorrow for the Death and Departure of our Nearest and Dearest Friends, that tis more than high Time we should think our selves nearly concern'd in the Accidents. Death hath come so near to me as to fetch a Portion from my very Heart, that I cannot choose but dig my own Grave, and place my Coffin in my Eye, by these Reflecting Meditations of Death. In Scripture, where Sorrows are illustrated to the Height, God is pleas'd to have them compared to the Mother that mourneth for her Only Child. You can witness, *Dear Madam,* that She whom I have lost was not only my Only One, but in all Particulars an Extraordinary One. What Allowance must then be given for my Grief and yours; to lose Her whose Life was a Comfort, and whose Death (which signified a Fore-tast of Glory)

* A *

The Epistle Dedicatory

ry) hath almost cost me time! But I
must not enlarge herein to Your Lady-
ship's Trouble, nor thereby to aggravate
and magnifie my own.

And Now I, Dear Cousin, without a Deep
Sense of Compassion for those sufficient
Tryals your Christian Patience hath been
exercised with, which have turn'd into
Virtue's Advantage: Affliction being the
best Tryal of Virtue.

And Madam, In that I have the Honour of
being so nearly Related to you, and for so
many Years the Intimacy of your Friend-
ship, obliges me to manifest the Continu-
ance of mine by what I here communi-
cate for your Friendly Perusal; which, for
your better Satisfaction, hath been (with
my most Strict and Diligent Care) taken
from, and is grounded upon, the best Or-
thodox Writers of our True and Pure Re-
ligion; as my Quotations prove. And
if I have trespass'd in detaining you too
long in the House of Mourning, be pleas'd
(for

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(for my *Apology*) to reflect on *Solomon's* Advice, That *better it is to be in the House of Mourning than in the House of Daughter.*

Thus, as to a Dear Friend that hath often sympathiz'd with me in my Affliction, I hereby endeavour to suppress your fined any *Esentment* of your Trouble mitigates mine.

I confess, *Dear Madam*, I have taken the Liberty of putting your Deserving Name before my Book, that all, by the Fairness of such a Frontispiece, may be invited to look into it; that if there be no other Worth in it, yet at least it may have the Splendor and Warmth of a Burning glass, which, borrowing a Flame from the Eye of Heaven, shines and burns by the Rays of the Sun, its Patron.

If now what I here present prove but so Prosperous as to do some Good in the World, and obtain Your Ladyship's Acceptance, it will be a sufficient Compensation of my well-meant Endeavours.

101)

Madam

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Madam, That your Life may still continue Happy and Prosperous; That your Bright Example may be a Pattern to your Honourable Posterity; That you may delight to Oblige, and take Pleasure in the Relief of the Distressed; And that you may enjoy all the Blessings here, and Eternal Felicity hereafter; is the Hearty Prayer of,

Honoured Madam,

Your Most Affectionate Cousin,
True Friend, and Devoted
Humble Servant,

FRA. NORTON.

THE

The Epistle Dedicatory

That your life may still con-
tinue happy and prosperous; That your
bright example may be a Pattern to your
Honourable Society; That you may be
able to Oblige, and take Pleasure in the
Relief of the Distressed; And that you
may enjoy all the Blessings here, and here-
after, is the hearty Prayer

Honoured Madam,

Your Most Affectionate Cousin,
True Friend, and Devoted
Humble Servant,

FRANK NORTON

THE

THE

PREFACE.

I Know nothing in the World that can be more effectual to engage Men to be substantially Religious, than their being thoroughly convinc'd of this Truth, That the Eternal Happiness or Misery of Souls is founded on their Virtues or Vices: So that if we intend heartily to serve God, and avoid Sin in any one Instance, we must not refuse the hardest and most severe Advice that is prescribed in order to it, tho' possibly it may be a Stranger to us; for whatsoever it be, Custom will make it easie.

'Tis a great Art to Die well, and a good Thing to be Learned by Men in Health; by them that can Discourse, Consider, and Act with Reason, and who are not abated with Fear or Pain. He that prepares not for Death before his Last Sicknes, is like him that begins to study Philosophy when he is going to dispute publickly in the Faculty: All that a Sick and Dying Man can do, is but to exercise those Virtues which he before acquired, and to perfect that Repentance which was begun more
* B early.

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early. The Degrees and Difficulties of those Graces which are necessary Preparations to a Holy Death, are so many, that the very learning the Duties require Study and Skill, Time and Understanding, in the Way of Godliness.

Consider again the Abilities of Body and Mind there can be supposed in a Sick, Amazed, Timorous and Weak Person, whose Natural Actions are disabled, whose Senses are weakned, whose Discerning Faculties are lessened, whose Principles are made intricate and intangled, upon whose Eyes sits a Cloud, and the Heart is broken with Sickness, and the Liver pierced through with Sorrow and the Strokes of Death! So that indeed it were vain I should intend these ensuing Discourses to be read or studied by Sick or Dying Persons; and they were vainer that should need be so instructed in those Graces which they are then to exercise or finish: For a Sick-bed is only a School of Severe Exercise, in which the Spirit of a Man is tried, and his Graces are rehearsed; which confirms a Good Man, or supports the Weak, or adds Degrees, or ministers Comfort, or prevents an Evil, or cures the little Mischiefs which are incident to attend Persons in their Weakness.

But to the Old Persons--- It is desired of them, That they would sadly consider, that their Advantages in that State are very few, but their Inconveniencies many: Their Bodies are without Strength; their Prejudices long and mighty; their Vices (if they have lived Wicked)

THE PREFACE.

Wicked are *Habitual*; the *Occasions of Virtue* not many: And these Persons, having lost their *Time* and their *Blessed Opportunities*, should have the *Diligence of Youth* and the *Zeal of New Converts*, and take Account of every Hour that is left them, and pray perpetually, and be advised prudently, and study the Interest of their Souls carefully, with *Diligence* and with *Fear*; that their *Old Age*, which in effect is nothing but a *Continual Death-bed*, may be a *State of Hope, Labour, and Acceptance*, through the *Infinite Mercy of God in Christ Jesus*.

But, concerning *Sinners* really under the *Arrest of Death*, God hath made no *Death-bed Covenant*; the *Scripture* hath recorded no *Promises*, and given no *Instructions* for them: And therefore I shall only repeat *St. Bernard's Words*; Who can conceive that *Horror and Confusion of Thought*, when the *Flesh* is just upon the *Brink of Dissolution*, and all the *Friends and Comforts of this World* forsake him, which shall seize the *Sinner* upon the *Approach of that State* which he is now entering into, and knows that it shall never have an *End*!

Is it not a *sad Thing*, to see those that are dead to go out of the *Minister's Hands* (as they liv'd and dy'd) *Incuriously*, and without *Regard*! And the *Last Part of their Lives*, which should be dressed with all *Spiritual Advantages*, be abused by *Flattery and Superstition*, and let go with *Carelessness and Folly*!

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And now methinks, when our Present State is so uncertain, and perplex'd with so many Disappointments, we should be more than ordinarily concern'd to make sure of Something, and to provide for a Future Well-being, that so we may not be Miserable in Both Worlds.

The Practice of all Virtues is an Essential Part of the Life of a Christian, and a Necessary Means to our Blessed End. I pray God, That what I have written may but engage some more Skilful Pen than mine in the Prosecution of this One Thing necessary, The Salvation of our Souls, by our Pious Living, which will end in a Holy Dying: For Wisdom is the Meditation of Death.

Memento

Memento Mori :

OR, MEDITATIONS ON DEATH.

*Of Time, with the Right Use of it, our Best
Preparation for Death.*

Tertullian saith, That Man wasts his Time
in Pleasure, which slips away like Water
engendred by a Storm; and at last he
finds himself abandoned like a Pilgrim
dispoiled by a Thief: The many Golden Harvests,
which Time presented to him, are passed away, and
the Rust of heavy Age furnisheth him with nothing
but

but Thorns ; Sorrows to have *done ill*, and Inabilities of *doing well*. What then remains to be said, but that which the Miserable King *Lysimachus* said, who gave his Sceptre for a Glas of Water ? *Alas ! Must I, for so short a Pleasure, lose so great a Kingdom ?*

He that is choice of his Time, will also be choice of his Company, and choice of his Actions ; lest the First engage him in Vanity and Loss, and the Latter in throwing his Time and Self away to all Eternity. No Man is so Miserable as he that is at a Loss to spend his Time ; since *Zeno* assures us, the Thing which Man most wanteth in this Life, is Time : For we let go the Present which we have in our Power, and so quit a Certainty for an Uncertainty.

There be Three Ways to lose Time ; First, In doing ill ; Secondly, In doing nothing ; Thirdly, In doing too much. The First, is the Vicious ; the Second, the Idle ; the Third, the Vain and Unhappy.

O how many Damned Souls do now groan in Flames which all the Ocean cannot extinguish, for having contemned Time ! Nay, we know not by how little a Thread the Sword of Justice hangeth over our Heads. The Day of Death is near at Hand ; the Post is on the Way, which bringeth the

the Date thereof: What Account shall it decipher
of the Follies of our Youth?

It should be our Care, before we are Old, to
live well; and when we are so, to Die well. That
only can be called Time, which is present. Saith
Justin, to a Nobleman loose in the Vanities of
this World, God hath given you Time, and a Soul of
Gold, so excellent it is, so deliciously purified; and you
use it as an Instrument of Sensuality, and make it a
Vessel of Abomination, wherein you present your Soul to
Satan as a Sacrifice: Fear you not the Anger of God?
The Peace of a Good Conscience is the Inseparable
Companion of a Good Man, which seasoneth and
dissolveth all the Imbittered Disasters of this Life,
and is a Delicious Torrent of Inexplicable Content-
ment: This will be the Effect of well spent Time.
And know, that no Man is a better Merchant than
that lays out his Time upon God, and his Mo-
ney upon the Poor.

So long as our Time is well imployed, we shut
Idleness out of our Lives, and there will be but
little Room left for Temptations. Idleness is called
the Sin of Sodom, and her Daughter: And indeed
the Burial of a Living Man; an Idle Person
being very useless to any Purpose of God and
Man.

Every Day well spent may become a Day of
Salvation; yet a Man may be very idly busie:
There-

Therefore remember the Time we trifle away was given us to repent in, to pray for Pardon of Sins, to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, to lay up against the Day of Judgment a Treasure of Good Works.

Idleness is the greatest Prodigality in the World, we having a great Work to do in a short Time, many Enemies to conquer, many Evils to prevent, much Dangers to run through, many Difficulties to be mastered, many Necessities to serve, and much Good to do. We live as if we should never die; Our greatest Loss of Time is Delay and Expectation, which depend upon the Future.

'Twas the Saying of *St. Austin*, That when any Prosperity presented it self to his Eye, he durst not touch it: He looked on Pleasure as a fleeting Bird, which, ready to be seized, will fly away as soon as ever she see her self surprized. So that he thought there was no greater Pleasure in the World than the Contempt of Pleasure.

To Conclude: Who dare open his Mouth to complain of doing too much, of suffering too much, of being too much abased, too much despised, too much turmoiled; if he considers the Life of God, which was delivered over, and abandoned for him, to so painful Labour, so horrible Confusion, so insupportable Torments! O my

God

my Wounded God ! as long as I shall see
my Wounds, I shall never live without Wounds.

*Hazard of a Death-bed Repentance ; with
the Bliss of a True Penitent.*

T. Ambrose saith, It is unreasonable to plant all
our Hopes of Heaven upon a Doctrine that
is destructive of all Piety, which supposes us in such
a Condition that God hath been offended at us all
our Lives long, and yet that we can never return
our Duty to him, unless he will unravel the Pur-
poses of his Predestination, or call back Time a-
gain, and begin a new Computation of Years for
us, and if he did, it would be still as uncertain :
what Hope is there to that Man who hath ful-
filled all Iniquity, and hath not fulfilled Righteous-
ness ? Can a Man live to the Devil, and die to
God ? sow to the Flesh, and reap to the Spirit ?
Will God will in Mercy reward him, who hath
loved his Enemy ?

If a Holy Life be necessary, as it is certain by
infinite Testimonies of the Scripture, may *the One*
being necessary ; it cannot reasonably be thought
that any thing less than doing it shall serve our
ends. That which is only in Purpose, is not done ;
and yet it is necessary it should be done, because it
is necessary we should purpose it. Doth not Saint

* C

Paul

Paul tell us, That in Jesus Christ nothing can avail but a New Creature; nothing but Faith working by Charity; nothing but a keeping the Commandments of God: And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be to them.

Saith St. Hierom, A Sorrow upon a Death-bed, after a Vicious Life, is such as cannot be easily understood to be ordinarily so much as the Beginning of Virtue, or the First Instance towards a Holy Life: For he that till then retained his Sins, and now, when he is certain, and believes he shall die, or is fearful lest he should, is sorrowful that he hath sinned; is only sorrowful because he is like to perish: And such a Sorrow may perfectly consist with as great an Affection to Sin, as ever the Man had in the highest Caresses and Invitations of his Lusts.

Death-bed Penitents, who have spent their Lives viciously, mean to mock God; they would reap what they sowed not. But be not deceived: (saith the Apostle) He that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting.

St. Austin saith, to this Effect, That the Doctrine of a Death-bed Repentance avails not, which cannot be reconciled with God's Purposes and Intentions, to have us live Good Lives; for it would reconcile us to the Hopes of Heaven, for a few Thoughts, or Words, or single Actions, when
our

our Lives are done : It takes away the Benefit of many Graces, and the Use of more, and the Necessity of all.

A Purpose of Obedience is but the Element of Repentance ; the first Imagination of it differing from the Grace it self, as a Disposition from a Habit. For either a Holy Life is necessary, or it is not necessary : If it be not, why does any Man hope to escape the Wrath to come, by resolving to do an unnecessary Thing ? Or if he does not purpose it, when he pretends he does, that is a Mocking of God, and that is a great way from being an Instrument of his Restitution.

Plato saith, The many Temptations of the Devil ; the Strength of Passion ; the Impotency of the Flesh ; the Illusions of the Spirit of Darkness ; the Tremblings of the Heart ; the Incogitancy of the Mind ; the Implication and Intanglings of Ten thousand Thoughts ; and the Impertinences of a Disturbed Fancy ; and the great Hindrances of a Sick Body ; and a Sad, Weary Spirit : All these represent a Death-bed to be but an Ill Station for a Penitent. If the Person be suddenly snatched away, he is not left so much as to dispute ; if he be permitted to languish in his Sicknes, he is either stupid, and apprehends nothing ; or else miserable, and hath Reason to apprehend too much. However, all these Difficulties are to be passed and

overcome, before the Man be put into a Saveable Condition. From this Consideration (tho' perhaps it may insert more) we cannot but conclude this Difficulty to be as great as the former Danger, that is vast, and ponderous, and insupportable.

There is a Repentance which is to be repented of, which is not Productive of Fruits of Amendment of Life. They who have long refused to hear God calling them to Repentance, God will refuse to hear their calling for Grace and Mercy; as saith the Scripture, *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regardeth: --- But have set at naught all my Counsel, and would have none of my Reproof; --- I will also laugh at your Calamity, and will mock when your Fears come.*

We add to our Confidence only as our Obedience is restored. He that hath done all his Business, and is begotten to a Glorious Hope by the Seed of an Immortal Spirit, can never die too soon, nor live too long.

Saith Seneca, We spend in Waste what God hath given us in Plenty, when we sacrifice our Youth to Folly, our Manhood to Lust and Rage, our Old Age to Covetousness and Irreligion; not beginning to live till we are to die; designing that Time to Virtue which indeed is infirm to everything, and profitable to nothing: Then we make our Lives short,

and Lust runs away with all the vigorous
of it. We spend as if we had too much
fear every Thing like weak and silly Mor-
and desire, and are greedy, as if we were
mortal. But by a present and a constant Holiness se-
thes the present Time, and makes it useful to his
le Purposes; he turns his Condition into the
Advantage, by making his unavoidable Fate
ome his necessary Religion. Our Lives are very short, yet they may be very
py, if they be not soured by our Sins. No-
g continues, but the Effects of that Wisdom
ch employs the present Time in the Acts of a
y Religion, and a Peaceable Conscience; for
t makes us live even beyond our Funerals, em-
ned in the Spices and Odours of a Good Name,
entombed in the Grave of the Holy Jesus,
re we shall be dressed for a Blessed Resurrection
he State of Angels. It was St. Cyprian's Counsel to Old Demetrius,
in the Evening of thy Days, when thy Soul is al-
expiring, repent of thy Sins, believe in Jesus, and
Christian; and altho thou art almost in the En-
es of Death, yet thou shalt be comprehended of Im-
penitence, of all Things in the World, makes
simplest Change, it changes the whole Man
from

from Sin to Grace, from Vicious Habits to Holy Custom, from Unchast Bodies to Angelical Souls.

O Happy Penitent! when God vouchsafes, in Mercy, to cancel the Bills of Accusation, and lift up the Sinner from the Grave, to Life; from his Prison, to a Throne; from Hell, and the Gates of Eternal Torment, to Heaven, and a Title to Never-ceasing Felicity.

Lastly, A Holy Life is the only Perfection of Repentance, and the firm Ground upon which we can cast the Anchor of Hope in the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Against Presumption on a Death-bed.

WHEN *Arsenius* was near his End, he was observed to be very tremulous, sad, weeping, and disconsolate. The Standers-by asked the Reason of his Fear; wondering that he, having lived in great Sanctity for many Years, should not now rejoice at the Going forth of his Prison. The Good Man confessed his Fear; and withal said, It was no other than what he had always born about with him in the Days of his Pilgrimage; and what he then thought a Duty, they had no Reason now to call either a Fault or a Misery.

Great Sorrow, Fear, and Distrust of a Man's own Condition, are oftentimes but an Abatement of

of Confidence, or a Remission of Joy and Gaver-
ness of Spirit; they are but like Solitary Clouds,
dark and fruitful. If the Tempted Person be
strengthened in the Love of God, he is like a Root
in the Ground trod upon, humble and safe, which
will spring up in a Glorious Resurrection.

Saith *St. Austin*, That Form of Absolution which
the Churches of the West now use, declaratory of
a present Pardon, are, for the very Form sake, not
to be used to Death-bed Penitents, after a Vicious
Life; because if any thing more be intended in
the Form than a Prayer, the Truth of the Affirma-
tion may be questioned; and an Ecclesiastical Per-
son hath no Authority to say to such a Man, *I Ab-*
solve thee: And a common Form of Address is
better to use than such Words, which may coun-
tenance unsecure Confidence, evil Purposes, and
worse Lives.

St. Hierom reports, That *Hilarion* in a Death-bed
Agony felt some Tremblings of Heart, yet still re-
flecting upon his Course of Life, he found Com-
fort springing from thence, by a proper Emanation,
and departed cheerfully. And King *Hezekiah* pre-
sented in Prayer to God the Integrity of his Life,
and made it the Instrument of his Hope. But (as
saith *St. Hierom*) because such Persons are but sel-
dom and rare, if the same Confidence be observed
in Persons of common Imperfection and ordinary
Lives,

LIVES. It is to be corrected and allayed with the Consideration of the Divine Severity and Justice, and with the strict Requisites of a Holy Life, with the Decree of a Man's own Heart, the Remembrance of Secret Sins, and that the most Perfect State of Life hath very great Need of Mercy: If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear? But the Spirit of a Man is to be promoted and helped (saith St. Austin) in the Increase of Contrition, as being the proper Delectum to cure the Extravagancies of a Froward and Intemperate Spirit.

Eschewing Evil is but one Half of our Work; we must also do Good in the few remaining Days or Hours of our Lives.

That Death brings Immortality and Bliss by our Daily Preparation for it.

Saith St. Austin, If Death in many Cases be desirable, for many Reasons, it is always to be submitted to when God calls: And as it is always a Misery to fear Death, so it is very often a Sin, or the Effects of Sin. If our Love of the World hath fastned our Affections here, it is a direct Sin; noted to be the Case of Rich and Great Personages. How bitter, O Death, is thy Remembrance to a Man that is at Rest in his Possessions.

All our Lives we are dying; and this Minute, in which I write, Death divides with me, and hath got the Super-part and more certain Possession. It is but reasonable we should always be doing the Offices of Preparation. If to Day we were not passing on to our Graves, then we might with more Safety defer our Work till to Morrow. The Age of every Day is a Beginning of Death; and the Night, composing us to Sleep, bids us go to our Latter Rest. When the last Day of Dying will come, we know not; therefore to put off our Preparation till that which we call Death, is to put off the Work of all our Lives till the Time comes in which it is to cease and determine.

Let us celebrate our Early Endeavours, and consider no Man is sure he shall not die suddenly: How many have we heard and read in History of, that hath been the Fate of Others, who were Happy by an Early Parting, or Miserable by a Sudden Death? And if Uncertainty of Condition be an Abatement of Felicity, and foul the Goods we possess; no Man can be Happy, but he that hath Lived well, and hath secured his Condition by a Habit of Pious Living.

As soon as a Man is born, that which in Nature only remains in him, is to die: A Wise Man will always suppose himself upon his Death-bed, and such a Disposition is like making his Will; he is

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not

not the nearer Death for doing it, but he is the readier for it when it comes.

'Tis a certain Wonder, that since all the Records of Scripture utter the Uncertainty of the Day of Death, the Horror of the Day of Judgment, the Severity of God, the Dissolution of the World, the Certainty of Accounts, that we should not watch and stand in Readiness, to live in all Holy Conversation and Godliness. A Holy Life is the only Preparation to a Holy Death. *St. Ambrose* saith, *The Troubles of this Life and the Dangers are so many, that, in respect of them, Death is a Remedy, and a far more proper Object of Desire.* We find many that have prayed for Death, that they might not see the great Misery and Persecution incumbent upon the Church: And *St. Austin*, upon the Incurfion of the *Vandals* into *Africa*, called his Clergy together, and at their Chapter told them, He had prayed to God, either to deliver his People from the present Calamity, or grant them Patience to bear it; or that he would take him out of the World, that he might not see the Misery of his Diocese; adding, That God had granted him the Last: And he presently fell sick, and died in the Siege of his own *Hippo*.

The Fathers assembled in the great *Nice* Council have taught all the Christian World to make the most necessary Provision for our Last Journey,

who bids us to wash our Hands in Innocence with David, and so to approach the Altar. Let us not then, for any Excuse less than Impossibility, omit to receive the Holy Sacrament, in Memory of that Death by which we hope for Life and Immortality.

Saith St. Bernard, *Certain it is, Death threatens thee every where; therefore, above all Things, take care of thy Soul, that God may set up his Rest there with Pleasure, being purged from Uncleaness by Godly Tears and Frequent Prayers; from Idle, and Vicious, and Fruitless Imaginations: For if He dwell in thee by the Spirit of Grace, He will not fail to deliver thee both from Death and the Devil.*

A Good Life is the Happiness of Mankind; it can look Death in the Face, and bid it welcome. He that desires to Die well and happily, above all Things must be careful he does not live a Delicate, Soft, and a Voluptuous Life; but a Life severe and Holy, under the Discipline of the Cross, and under the Conduct of Prudence and Watchfulness.

Certain it is, that a Mourning Spirit and an Afflicted Body are great Instruments of reconciling us to a Singer, and they always dwell at the Gate of Penance and Reformation. Saith our Blessed Lord, *Wee be to you that laugh, for ye shall mourn: but blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be com-*

Saith Seneca, *These are the best Instructions that teach in their Lives, and prove their Words by their Actions.*

Plato got more from Socrates's Manners than from his Words.

It is the frequent Thoughts of Death that must fortifie us against the Necessity of it. It is the Care of a Wise and a Good Man to look into his Manners and Actions, and rather how well to live than how long. *Let me die for Love of Thee, my Blessed Lord! who hath loved me unto Death; that I may fully enjoy the Perfection of Thy Love in the Height of Thy Glory.*

Of Death, that it is the Repose of the Righteous.

Saith St. John the Divine, *And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain.*

Said the Emperor Constantine to his Princes and Captains, for telling him what Grief must his approaching Death be, who was become so necessary to all the World, and that the Prayers of all Men would prolong his Life; *Oh! what do you speak to me? As if it were not true Life, to die to so many dead Things, to live with my Saviour: No, this is no Death.*

Death, but a Passage to Immortality: If you love me, hinder not my Way; One cannot go too soon to God.

In the highest Wisdom, by despising the World, to arrive at Heaven: For they are Blessed, whose Daily Exercise it is to converse with God by Prayer, Obedience, Love, and Patience. They that are not prepared for Death, shall be perpetually troubled, as well with Vain Apprehensions as with Real Danger: For which Reason, we ought so to Think, and so to Do, as if we were to Die to Day, and at Night to give an Account of our whole Lives.

He is a Great Man that is willing to die when his Life is pleasant to him. A Clear Conscience will enable us to meet Death with an Undaunted Courage. Would we entertain our selves with the Thoughts of Death, it would be less a Terror to us: For, in Proportion, as our Lives amend, our Fears would abate. Be assured, 'tis greater Wisdom to be afraid of Sinning, than to be afraid of Dying; a greater Blessing to preserve our Innocence, than to prolong our Lives: If Dying should prove terrible, yet remember Living long may be dangerous: Happy therefore is he who keeps the Hour of Death constantly in View, by living so that Death may never overtake him unprovided, nor the suddenest Approach be surprizing to him.

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O how Happy, how Wise is that Man, who makes it his Daily Care to be such while he liveth, as he desireth to be found when he comes to die! Let us neglect and despise the World, and that will make us zealous to improve in Virtue. Live then whilst you may, and begin from this present Minute to live so that you may live for Ever! For *Now is the Season of Acceptance, Now is the Day of Salvation.* If we suffer the Happy Opportunity to slip, we may wish for it afterwards when 'tis too late; and would joyfully give, were it in our Disposal, the whole World to purchase it. Saith Seneca, *It is a Blessed Thing to dispatch the Business of Life before we die, and then to expect Death in the Possession of a Happy Life: Yet the great Matter is to die considerately and cheerfully, upon the Foundation of Virtue: And then why should we that are sure to die, and that all other Things are mortal, be fearful to come to our Last Period? The Way never to fear Death, is to be often thinking of it. To what End is it to put off for a while that which we cannot avoid? For he that would not die, ought not to live; since Death is the Condition of Life. Without this Madness to fear a Thing that is certain, where there is no Doubt there is no Place for Fear. Life is to be measured by Action, and not by Time. How long I shall live may be in the Power of Others, but 'tis in our Own how well*

Let us look for Death in all Places, and at all Times; we can never study that Point too much. Did we but consider what Risque we run by our Delays, what Despair, Misery, Danger, and Confusion, may ensue; (which is now in our Power to prevent, by living like Men that remembers they must die) we should so spend every Hour, that when our last draws on, we may receive it with Joy and Hope, instead of Fear, Terror, and Amazement.

Learn Daily to die to Sin and the World; be disengaged from all that is here Below, that you may then begin to live with Christ by Self-denial: Leave all, and take up the Cross, and follow him, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, and you shall have great Boldness in the Day of Tribulation.

That Death which we so much dread and deprecate, is not a Determination, but an Intermission of Life, which will return again: 'Tis this that supports us in the Death of all our Children, Friends, and Relations; as also, that the Loss of their Company is sweetned again by the Contemplation of their Welfare. And tho' we have Instances of those who have preferred a Friend's Life before their own, we do not mourn for the Absent; why then should we for the Dead, who are effectually no other? We look on our greatest Blessing, but we have many others.

others left: And shall not these undeserved Mercies support us against the Extremity of our other Afflictions, either past, present, or to come? Again, How many Instances have we before our Eyes, or fresh in our Remembrance, of Persons miserably deluded and disappointed of their Hopes, and hurried out of the Body without any Warning at all? How often have we been surprised with the News of vast Varieties of Deaths surrounding us? So fleeting a Shadow is the Life of Man! And yet we know not but soon this may be our own Case. Let us not neglect the precious Opportunity now afforded us, but make good use of our Time while we have it: Let Religion and our own Salvation be our chief, our only Concern. Let us set our Affections on Things Above, for these Below are soon to leave us; they are meer Vanity, a meer Nothing, which can stand us in no stead; but the Love of God and Religion will stick by us when all the rest forsake us, and fill us with Confidence and joyful Expectation of the dreadful Day of Judgment, and let the Brightness above all the Terror and dismal Apprehensions of Hell and its Torments. This is the peculiar Privilege of the Servants of God, who have let the Love of God prevail over that of Sin, whose exalted Piety and Virtue have cost many a sore Conflict, in their Conquest over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, whose Good

Work

Works plead better than the most Accurate Eloquence. A Good Conscience is more useful learning than the most Elaborate Systems of Philosophy; the Honest Obedience of an Humble Faith more wise than the Nicest Cavils of the Subtilest Wits: The Afflicted and Persecuted shall bless his Bitter Cup, and feel more Refined, more Substantial Delights from it, than all the Sensual Pleasures or Uninterrupted Prosperity could ever bring to the most Voluptuous and Fortunate. The Plain Dress of the Humble Penitent shall shine as Glorious as the Sun. Then shall the Poor and Meek have great Boldness, when the Proud and Great Sinner shall tremble and quake at the Presence of God and the Lamb; then the Virtue of Patience, which hath been endured for Christ's Sake, (which is now thought just Matter of Derision and Contempt, accounted Folly and Religious Madness) be acknowledged, by its Satyrical Scorners, to be indeed the True, the Only Wisdom.

Consider, This Life is very Transitory, and that it will not be long e're you shall receive an Ample Recompence for all your Holy Labours, and see a Happy End of your Grief, Fear, Perplexities and Hardships. Be content with Travail and Pain, Asperision, Oppression, and Crosses, for a little while: Your Death shall be crowned with Glory, Honour, and Immortality; you shall be sure to

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find Rest, Peace, and Joy to your Souls. *The Toke is easie, the Burden is light; but the Weight of Glory is far more exceeding and eternal.* There are Two Wings by which a Man soars above the World, viz. Sincerity, and Purity: The Former regards the Intention; the Latter the Affection, that aspires and aims at a Likeness to God: This makes us really like him.

If there be such a thing as True Pleasure in the World, the Pure in Heart enjoy it: And if there be a Hell upon Earth, it dwells in that Man's Breast who hath a Guilty and Polluted Conscience.

The Lukewarm and Indifferent Christian grudges every thing he does, boggles at every Difficulty, and seeks his Satisfaction in Worldly and Outward Comforts. To renounce all Worldly Cares, is a True Argument of a Proficiency in Goodness.

Let nothing but God, and the Things that be of God, seem great or grateful to us: For a Soul entirely devoted to the Love of God, will naturally despise every thing in Comparifon of Him who is Eternal, Omnipresent, Infinite in every Excellence; and therefore He is the best, He is the only Comfort and true Joy of the Soul, who alone can fill and exceed us largest Desires: Let Him be your Hope, your Joy, your Love; and when all Things else at Death will certainly forsake you, 'tis He that will be All, and more than all the World to you.

Living

Living and Dying keep close and stedfast to Him whose Friendship and whose Power are Everlasting : For what indeed is all the World without Him ? To be deprived of His Friendship, is the Bitterness of Death ; to enjoy and possess Him, the only Happiness of Life : His Friendship is Security sufficient against a whole World of Enemies ; a Treasure above all the Riches of the Universe : He who finds this, hath more than both the *Indies* ; and he who loseth it, loses more than can be expressed ; in a Word, loses All.

Awake and prepare for Death by some new Conflict ; speak not Peace to thy self when beset on every side with numerous and restless Enemies : Mistake not, the Devil never sleeps ; he always watches for an Opportunity to assault us, and work our Mischief. Saith *Solomon*, *Man is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards* : The Cross is the Business we were created for, to which Patience is a most requisite Virtue. Let a Penitent and Contrite Spirit always be our Portion : The highest in God's Esteem are meanest in their own. Let us be thankful for all the Blessings we have received and resigned, and be patient when he takes any away. The New Covenant, which allows for Humane Frailties, accepts Sorrow for the past, Amendment for the Time to come ; a Fervent Love of God, and Honest Endeavours to serve Him.

Most certain 'tis that Death is every where, and the Devil is perpetually laying Snares to devour our Souls; he especially waits for his Prey when our Souls take their Flight out of our Bodies: But then 'tis that the Righteous fear not; for God, who dwelleth in them by the Spirit of his Grace, will not fail to deliver them both from the Devil and Eternal Damnation: He is the True Friend, that never forsakes them that trust in Him, except He be first forsaken by them.

Saith St. Bernard, *O how Happy and Blessed shall every Man be with God, who leaves this World with a Quiet and Clear Conscience, and to whom the Lord will not impute Sin! He shall see God, to the satisfying his Desires; he shall enjoy Him, to the consummating of his Pleasures: He shall shine in Truth, rejoice in Goodness, and flourish in a Never-decaying Eternity. How Glorious Things are spoken of thee, thou City of God! O Happy Mansion! In thee is nothing heard but the Voice of Praise and Thanksgiving, the Shouts and Exaltations of them that rejoice in God, whose Sight is charming, whose Words are sweet beyond all Expression. Thy Presence, O Lord, is Delightful, the Possession of Thee is entire Satisfaction: Thou, Thou alone, art Pleasant; Thou art more than a sufficient Reward: The highest Merits, the sharpest Sufferings, are over-paid in Thee. Beyond Thee there remains no new Object for our Wishes; for all that we*

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can possibly propose to our selves is found in Thee alone.

This is the utmost Perfection Mankind is capable of. To know, and entirely to love, their Creator. Thus Death to the Righteous is swallowed up in Victory.

Preparation for Death, a Proof of the Vanity of Worldly Greatness.

S Aith St. Austin, Why do we longer delay our Good Purposes? Why say we, to Morrow, to Morrow; and say not, to Day? Is it not Time to prepare for Death, to give End to a Life so exorbitant and troublesome to our selves? Can we any longer in Sins endure our selves? Must we ever be to Heaven an Object of Vengeance, and to Earth an Unprofitable Burden?

The greatest Knowledge in the World, is well to act your Part: It importeth not in what Condition of Life we are, so we discharge our Consciences and the Duties of our Places. Let us reflect: With what a Career our Days pass; what Virtue have we exercis'd; what Vices have we subdued; what Beneficial Use have we made of our Precious Time. Know; the indefatigable Harbinger is gone forth to secure you a Lodging in a Tomb.

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'Tis the best Imployment of Life to be well prepared for Death, and the good Thoughts of Death are the Seeds of Immortality; there being not any thing so mutable upon Earth as Man: For which, here is none content with his Condition, but he who will die whilst he lives; insomuch as Life cannot be good, unless it doth resemble Death. Yet if we desire Happiness in this Life, or Blessedness in the future, let these Reflections be our constant Meditation: The Instability of Humane Greatness; the Fate of Kingdoms; the Periods of Empires; the World's Funeral; Time laid in the Dust; the Dreadful Horror of the Last Judgment. Let us further consider the Prospect of Heaven; the Glory of the Blessed, and the Misery and Infelicity of the Damned. Again, Let us descend into Hell whilst we live, that we may not descend into it when we are dead.

Did we often call to Mind the Evil of the next Life, we should the readier despise the Pleasure of this: For which, let it work in us a perfect Hatred of all Sin, since from the Evil of Sin proceeds the Evil of Pain; so terrible is that Evil, as it cannot be satisfied even with Eternal Flames!

Virtue, Envy cannot demolish, nor Humane Power destroy. There is no Stability in any thing, and least in Man. *Marcus Polus* relates, That he passed through the City of *Quunsay*, which contained

Fourscore Millions of Souls ; and *Nicholas de Conte* passing, not many Years after, the same way, found the City wholly demolished, and began to be built after another Form.

There is no Confidence to be put in Humane Prosperity : Behold *Andronicus*, cloathed in Gold, adored by Nations, commanding the East, his Temples enriched with a Royal Diadem, the Imperial Sceptre in his Hand, and his very Shooes studded with Oriental Gems ; presently after he is insulted by the Basest of his People, pelted with Dirt and Stones in his Imperial City, and lastly they hung him up by the Heels between Two Pillars, where they left him to die.

Constantine the Great, who was arrived at the Height of Humane Felicity, said, His Life was something more honourable than that of the Shepherds, but much more troublesome.

There is no Felicity upon Earth which carries not its Counterpoise of Misfortune ; no Happiness which mounts so high, which is not depressed by some Calamity.

Who would have imagined that *Valentinus* the Emperor, who was mounted upon his brave Couriers trapped with Gold, and himself clad in Purple, crowned with the Imperial Diadem, adored by Nations, and commanding over Kingdoms ; should be taken Prisoner by the King of *Persia*, be kept

kept inclosed in a Cage like some Wild Beast, and used as a Foot-stool for the King to get a Horse back?

All Humane Greatness is Folly, since at last it must end, perhaps, in a Disaster or unhappy Conclusion. The Life of Man is a lamentable Tragedy, wherein we observe such contrary Extrems.

The Emperor *Vitellius*, whom the East and West acknowledged to be the great Monarch of the World, and who in *Rome* was saluted with such Glorious Titles, that he seemed to be all he could desire less than a God: Wherein ended all his Majesty, but in the greatest Infelicity and Misery that can be imagined? The People violently seized upon him, tied a Rope about his Neck, tied his Hands behind him, tore his Garments from his Back, stuck a Dagger under his Chin, haled him ignominiously down the Streets of *Rome*, cast Filth in his Face, reviled him with a Thousand Injurious Speeches, and at last killed him in the Market-place, and flung him where they us'd to cast the Corpses of Malefactors.

Thus all Humane Greatness is Vanity. Why should we grieve for the Loss of that which is thus uncertain? And that which is not worthy of Grief is not worthy of Love. Things Below, as they merit not our Affection when we enjoy them, so they ought not to vex and afflict us when we lose them.

them. Above all, let us forsake our Sins, and strive to do Virtuous Actions: Let us look upon our selves as Guilty Offenders, and let us stand in perpetual Fear of our Judge, to whom we must give an Account of all our Actions; and be assured, he that seriously thinks upon Death will never have the Boldness to sin. Infirmary and Misfortune are the Harbingers that prepare the Way for Death. It is to be admitted, that a Man, who knows he is to die, should make account of Temporal Felicity, which to the Greatest, in the Height of their Prosperity, soon doth perish.

Happy are the Dead who depart in the Favour of God, discharged of all their Burden, freed of a Thousand Cares, Strife, Pain, Afflictions, Maladies, Wants, Enormities, Evils, and Miseries: Such enter into Mansions of Glory, where they reap the Good Works done upon Earth, and shine like Stars in the Firmament of Heaven. How bright a Saint in Heaven shall shine, who here was like the Sun, what shall that Light be, which shall out-shine so many Suns?

St. Austine praised the Mother of the *Maccabees* thus, *O incomparable Mother! who knew what Death would do to her Children, yet she feared not to lose them. A Pattern of Martyrs, who equalled her Triumph to her Sufferings, and her Crown to Eternity.*

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When Death hath deprived us of a Dear Friend or Only Child, we must bear our Loss with a Saint-like Patience: 'Tis a wretched Virtue not to know what else to do than bewail the Dead. If we could draw aside the Curtain of Heaven, to see the State of Souls already departed out of their mortal Bodies to the promised Resurrection of the Faithful; how much should we be amazed, amazed, and confounded at the Weakness of our Tears!

I shall conclude this with a Saying which St. Lewis the French King made, when News came of his Mother's Death, (*Queen Blanch*) who first perceived by the Countenance of the Messengers, the Archbishop and his Confessor, that they were ready to tell him what was able to pierce the Heart of Man; before they could open their Mouths, *Let us go,* said he, *into my Oratory;* (that was the Magazine where they kept Arms and Ammunition to combat against *Worldly Delights*) and there he bid them tell him what they had to say. *They said, and sent you a long Time your Mother's Death, and your Person and Kingdom, hath taken her out of the World for her own Repose.* At these Words he fell upon his Knees before the Altar, and lifted up his Eyes and Hands to Heaven, *Said, O my God! I thank Thee; Thou hast afforded me my Death, because it was Thy Will; and now, deliver me by Thy Good Pleasure. Thou hast taught me to Fear Thee, and I loved her above*

Meditations on Death.

31

above all Creatures in the World, and she well deserved
it; but since Thou hast bereft me of her, Thy Name
be for Ever Blessed.

Shall we receive Good at the Hands of
the Lord, and shall we not receive Evil?

Found in Rome, Anno 1544.

A Coffin of Marble, Eight Foot long, and in it a
Cape embroider'd with Goldsmith's Work, which
weighed Thirty six Pounds of Gold, besides Forty
Rings, a Cluster of Emeralds, a little Mouse made
of another Precious Stone; among all these Rich
Things, Two Leg-bones of a Dead Corps, known
by the Inscription of the Tomb to be the Body of
St. Elizabeth Mary, Daughter of Sclifican, and Wife
of the Emperor Honorius, who died before Con-
summation of Marriage. About Twelve hundred
Years were past since she was buried with all these
Riches, yet she was no more in Earth!

*The Terrible Effects of being Unprepar'd for
Death by Others Examples.*

ST. Gregory reports of *Chrysarius* (a Gentleman in the Province of *Valery*) who was a very Rich and Witty, but withal Vicious, Lascivious, Covetous, and Proud: He being laid upon his Death-bed, fancied he saw two Spirits coming to arrest him and drag him to Hell: He fell into great Agony, and crying out loud, called for his Son, who was very Rich, and came and comforted him, saying he would have been rescued by any thing. But perceiving his Danger increased, and grown desperate, he called his Friends, and his Clergymen, Give me Assistance, but all he said was in vain: His Words being of no Use: There being no Place for his Assistance, that he Groaned continually with Tears and Groans.

The same story is told of a Learned Monk, whom I have heard of, who lay upon his Death-bed, fancied he saw two Spirits in a Place assigned him near to *Caesar*, and *Jesus* who Crucified our Blessed Lord. The Learned Person that stood about his Bed, said to him, Repent of his Sin, and I will give thee Mercy, and to Trust in Christ, and he answered, with Reason enough, *This I have done all my Life; the Sentence is passed upon me, and it is too late.*

Scab

Saith St. Anselm, Repentance must be our Work: For he that hath promised to Pardon us if we Return, hath not promised we shall Repent.

History tells us of one Gunizo, a Factious and Ambitious Prince; to whom, it is said, the Temp-
 tation gave notice of his Approaching Death: But
 when any Man preached Repentance to him, out
 of a strange consciousness, or the Spirit of Repro-
 bation, he stood like a dead and unconcern'd Per-
 son: In all other Discourses he was awake, and
 an answerer: For God had shut up the Gates of
 Mercy, that no Stream should issue forth to quench
 the Flames of Hell; or else had shut up the Gates
 of Repentance, and Remission, and it was too late
 now. But God sometimes do give them Pardon
 when they will, or denies them: Power to call;
 they will not answer: Nay, or God will not answer.
 These things are related by Men
 of former Ages, and of former Generation;
 but we live, as he that directs us: Let
 us then be wise, and heed left he say:
 And when he shall be found, all upon
 our hands, and feet: And think not much
 of Days and Years in this World;
 but be always standing with our Inclinations;
 in the presence of God, with his Word in Earnest
 upon our hearts, and upon our lives: When
 we shall be told, that is the Conclusion
 of

of this short Conflict we shall be carried by Angels in Triumph to Heaven, and there receive from the Captain of our Salvation a Crown of Everlasting Joy and Pleasure; when, after a few Minutes Pain and Labour, we shall live Millions of Millions of most Happy Ages in the Ravishing Fruition of a Boundless Good, and when these are expired, have as many Millions of Millions more to live. O! for Shame, look once more upon Heaven, and consider again what it is to dwell in Paradise with God, and Angels, and Saints, and in that Blessed Company to live out an Eternity in the most Rapturous Contemplations, and Love, and Joy; to feed upon a Happiness that is as Large as our Capacities, and as Lasting as our Beings.

Lastly, Let us consider: If Heaven be thus worth our securing, it were fit we should reckon every Day a Whisper of Death; and since Life is of so short and uncertain Continuance, it highly concerns us to look about us, and consider how we employ it. To Day a Man is vigorous, gay, and flourishing; and to Morrow he is cast down, withered, and gone. These Reflections ought to remind us of every Work, Word, and Thought, to be so ordered as if they were to be the last, and we instantly to die and render an Account of them: For now, now is the Season for Repentance, now is the Day of Salvation; and therefore this Mo-

ment is the first for our Purpose. Let us live then whilst we may, and begin from this present Minute to live so, that we may live for Ever: If we suffer this Happy Opportunity to slip, we shall regret it afterwards when 'tis too late. O what Rages do we run by our Delay! what Misery, Danger, Confusion, and Despair! which is now in our Power to prevent, by living like Men that remember they must die.

*Further Enforcing Arguments to Prepare
for Death.*

S Aith St. Ambrose, Death cometh apace; it expecteth us at all Hours, in all Places; and you cannot exceed to One short Minute, so much the Thoughts of it displease you. The Decrees are more clear and conspicuous than if they were written in the Beams of the Sun, and we cannot read them. His Trumpet soundeth more loudly, more intelligibly, than Thunder, and we cannot hear it not. There is not a Watch, Clock, or Bell, that doth not advertise us of our Last; and when the Hour, we must sound in our last Minutes. At the very Instant you read these Words, perhaps, are unloosed from the Earth, and stand before the Tribunal of God: What would you have if you were presently to bear them Company? I would, I think, dispose of your Body the Things

Things of which you shall have no need of out of your Body.

The Quintessence of all Wisdom is to Prepare for Death; in the Business we should turn all our Lives to consider the Faults that are committed are irreparable, and without Recovery. We should not live in the Prosperity of the World, than to a full Sea; which in a great Calm oft-times prefigeth the near approaching Tempest; to declare, that in Good we should live in Distrust of Ill, and in Evil in Hopes of Good; but both the One and the Other ever in Equality. This is verily one of the Master-pieces of Wisdom, which God imparteth greatly to a religious spirit. We are Masters of our own Wills, but God hath reserved to himself the Command over us. Moreover, should we put all the Silver and Wealth we have in one Heap, all the Gold and precious Jewels, Mansions, with all other rich things, as the Temples of the Romans, all the Houses and Palaces of the Assyrians, all would come to be of no other Value than Dirt, if to be perished with the loss of taking a life into the next breath.

Said Sir Joseph, We should be ready to depart hence cheerfully, when Death shall call the Reason. And Seneca saith, There is no Science in the World so good, as to Live and Die well: The

Profess

Profession of other Arts are vulgar and many, but he that knows to do this Business is certainly instructed to Eternity.

Death is the Harbour whither God hath designed every one, that they may find Rest from the Troubles of the World. Let us never passionately love any thing, nor be proud of any Circumstance of this Life.

Holiness is the only Principle of Immortality both to Soul and Body. Those love their Bodies most, those honour them most, who make them Instruments of Virtue: This is to offer up our Bodies a living Sacrifice, when we entirely devote them to the Service of God; and such living Sacrifices shall live for Ever. The great Living in this World is to be Happy in the next. What concerns a better Life, must take up most of our Thoughts and Care; and whatever endangers our future Happiness, must be rejected, with all its Charms: For which, it becomes a Wise Man to make this present Life wholly subservient to his future Happiness.

Says Plato, *That which we call Death, is the Beginning of Immortality. The meanest Place in Heaven is a Happiness too great for us to conceive, I am sure much greater than our greatest Deserts: But since our Bounteous Lord will reward all the Services we do, why should we neglect doing any Good, when such Neg-*

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lest will lessen our Reward? Why should we be contented to lose any Degree of Glory? This is good Reason why we should begin to serve God betimes, and to take all Opportunities of doing Good; we having only a short Life to work in for Eternity. Let us be rich in Good Works, and lay up our Treasure in Heaven.

It must be the Business of our whole Lives to prepare for Death; our Accounts must be always ready, because we know not how soon we may be called to give an Account; we must be always upon our Watch, as not knowing *what Hour our Lord will come.* This should beget in us a Divine Nature, to love God above all the World; and as we every Day grow more devoutly and passionately in Love with God, take greater Pleasure in Spiritual Acts of Religion, in praising God, contemplating the Divine Nature and Perfection, and meditating on the Spiritual Glory of another Life; so we abate of our Value for present Things, till we get a perfect Conquest and Mastery of them. These therefore are the Actions of Life, because they are the Seeds of Immortality. That Day wherein we have done some excellent Thing, we may truly reckon to be added to our Lives.

Man never had one Day to himself of entire Peace from the Things of the World, but either something troubled him, or nothing satisfied him, or his very Fullness swell'd him.

When

When the Prince of *Persia* wept because his Army should all die in the Revolution of an Age, *Artabarius* told him, They should all meet with Evils so many and great, that every Man of them should wish himself dead long before that.

Strive not to forget your Time, and suffer none of it to pass unconcern'd. The Prosperity of this World is so infinitely soured with the overflowing of Evil, that he is accounted the most happiest that hath the least.

Saith St. Bernard, *Many are deeply learned in Varieties of Arts and Sciences, and all the while continue profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are inquisitive about the Affairs of other Men, and perfectly void of Thought or Care of their own.*

Death meets us every where, and is procured by every Instrument, and in all Chances, and enters in by many Doors, by Violence and secret Influences. We take Pains to heap up Things useful to our Life, and get our Death in the Purchase; and the Person is snatched away, and the Goods remain. This Day is mine and yours, but I know not what shall be to Morrow.

Saith Seneca, *Happy is the Man that can look upon Death, and see its Face with the same Countenance with which he tells a Story; that can equally despise Riches when he hath them, and when he hath them not; that is neither moved with Good Fortune coming to him,*

or going from him; that never thinks his Charity expensive, if a Worthy Person be the Receiver; that does nothing for Opinion sake, but every thing for Conscience; being as curious of his Thoughts as of his Actions, in a Market or Theatre; as much in Awe of himself as of a whole Assembly; that contrives his secret Affairs as in the Presence of God and his Holy Angels.

He that would Die well, must always look for Death every Day knocking at the Gate of the Grave; and then the Gate of the Grave shall never prevail upon him, to do him Mischief. We must all the Days of our Lives lay up against the Day of Death, by Holiness and Pious Living; we must love Charity, Humility, Solitude, and Repentance. Death taketh no Security: For which Cause, Man dyeth for his own Person.

Good God! who is able to express what a Sinner doth against Thee and himself? He despiseth Thy Majesty, razes out Thy Law from his Heart, contemns Thy Justice, scorns thy Threats, despiseth Thy Promises, makes a solemn Renunciation of the Glory Thou hast promised him; and all to bind himself an Eternal Slave to Satan!

Notwithstanding the many Exhortations to prepare for our Last Day, which is so near approaching, will our Delay stop the Current of Death, whether we are travelling with Speed, and cannot, tho' we desire it, rest one Moment by the Way? For
Time,

Time, altho' against our Wills, will draw us along with it. The Way of this Life is not voluntary, like that of Travellers; but necessary, like that of Condemned Persons, from the Prison unto the Place of Execution. To Death we stand condemned, whither we are now going: How dare we sin, or rejoice in these Things which we are to leave so suddenly! 'Twas a great Truth which one said, *Woe be to the most Innocent Life, if God should search into it without a Mixture of Mercy; since all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, shall be recalled to a severe Judgment.* The Way to prevent God's Anger, is to be angry with our selves; by examining our Actions, and condemning the criminal. This Advice may be a proper Instrument to Virtue; 'twas that which *Pythagoras* taught his Scholars: *Let not Sleep seize upon the Regions of your Senses, before you have Three times recalled the Conversations and Accidents of the Day.* Then is Christ's Kingdom set up in our Hearts, when we always live in the Eye of our Judge.

I shall close up this Subject with telling you, how that *St. Austin*, when his Death drew near, desired not to be troubled with Lamentations nor Visits, for Ten Days together; but on these Words of the *Psalmist* was his Contemplation, and written about his Bed: *My God, I believe; assist my Incredulity.-- I know my Redeemer is living, and that I shall*

shall see him in the same Flesh which I at this present discharge.-- Tho' I walk in the Shadow of Death, I will fear nothing ; because, O my God, Thou my God art with me.-- What have I to desire in Heaven, and what on Earth, but Thee ?--- My Flesh and my Heart are interested in Thee, O the God of my Heart, and my Portion to all Eternity.-- Wherefore art thou so sad, O my Soul ? and why dost thou trouble me ? Turn now to thy Rest, because God hath afforded thee Mercy ?

Of Death, and its Last Preparation.

SAITH St. Hierom, *He deserves not the Name of a Christian, who will live in that State of Life in which he will not die.*

Indeed he ventures hard, who lives in an evil State of Life ; because every Minute of it is attended with a Danger, and a Succession of Actions, in every one of which he may as well perish as escape : It is a Boldness that hath no Mixture of Wisdom in it.

Let us resolve, by the Assistance of God's Grace, from this Day forward, to live to our Benefit and Happiness ; and to redeem that Time which hath been hitherto mispent to our infinite Detriment and Danger : For surely we ought to imploy the Term allotted us in this World, as becomes Men who have a lively Hope, that when our perishing Bodies shall

shall be Food for Worms, our immortal Souls shall enter into Joy with the Saints. Why should we not make the best of our Way to those happy Regions, where we shall live for Ever secure from Fear, or Possibility to die any more? Why are we so immoderately fond of this Life here Below, which is so short, and so perpetually upon Decay; when we are by the Enemy of our Souls so closely besieged; when we make so hard a Shift to live with tolerable Comfort; when Labour, Sleep, and other Necessities of the Body, devour so great a Portion of our Time; and all does but just support this Mass of Clay? This will teach us to die daily to the World, as Persons who *have here no continuing City*, but ought to seek one to come. Nor let us ever entertain any such fond Prospects and vain Confidence of long Life, as may tempt us to presume Death and Judgment is at a great Distance, and our selves free of any Surprize from them; but rather to expect them every Moment, both from the daily Spectacles of Mortality in our Neighbours, and the sensible Decays or sudden Changes which happen to our selves; and also, to quicken our Preparations to meet the Lord, who hath compared himself to a Thief in the Night, and foretold us, that he will come in such an Hour as we think not of.

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Saith St. Hierom, Let God be praised for all his Graces and Blessings of our Lives ; let him be entreated for Pardon of our Sins ; let Acts of Love and Contrition, of Hope, of Joy, and of Humility, be the Work of every Day which God still permits us ; always remembering to ask Remission for those Sins we remember not : And if the Condition of our Sickness permit it, let our last Breath expire with Acts of Love, that it may begin the Charities of Eternity, and, like a Taper burning to its lowest Bait, it may go out with a great Emission of Light, leaving a sweet Smell behind it to perfume our Coffins ; and that these Lights, newly made brighter, or trimmed up in our Sickness, may shine about our Herfes, that they may become Arguments of a Pious Sadness to our Friends, and Exemplar to all those who observed, or shall hear of, our Holy Lives and Religious Deaths.

To Conclude with St. Gregory, Those who by thy Means or Importunity have become Vicious, exhort to Repentance and Holy Lives ; those whom thou hast cozened into Crimes, restore to a Right Understanding ; those who are by Violence and Interest led Captive by thee, or by any Undecency, restore to their Liberty, and encourage them to the Prosecution of Holiness ; discover and confess thy Fraud and unlawful Acts, cease thy Violence, and give as many Advantages to Virtue as thou hast done to Viciousness.

*The Happiness describ'd of a Well-spent Life
at the Hour of Death.*

S Aith Seneca, Let us live in our Bodies as if we were only to lodge in them this Night, and to leave them to Morrow. It is the frequent Thoughts of Death that must fortifie us against the Necessity of it. To die sooner or later is not the Business, but to die well or ill: For Death brings us to Immortality.

O the Bliss of a well-spent Life! O the Felicity of that Soul, when 'tis leaving the Prison of the Body! O the Joy unexpressible! O the Happiness inconceivable! O the astonishing Raptures and Exaltations it then participates of, when the Veil is rent, and the Prison-doors are open, at the Presence of God! The Soul goes forth full of Hope, sometimes with Evidence, but always with Certainty in the Thing; and instantly it passes into the Throngs of Spirits, where Angels meet it, singing; and the Devils flock with malicious and vile Purposes, desiring to lead it away with them into their Houses of Sorrow: There they see Things which they never saw, and hear Voices which they never heard: There the Devils charge them with many Sins, and the Angels remember that themselves rejoiced when they were repented of: Then the Devils aggravate and describe all the Circumstances of their Sins,

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and add Calumnies; and the Angels bear the Sword forwards still, because their Lord doth answer for them: Then the Devils rage, and gnash their Teeth, they see the Soul Chast and Pure, and they are ashamed; they see it Penitent, and they despair; they perceive that the Tongue was refrained and sanctified, and then hold their Peace: Then the Soul passes forth and rejoices, passing by the Devils in Scorn and Triumph, being securely carried into the Bosom of the Lord; where it shall rest till its Crown is finished and its Mansion is prepared; and then it shall feast and sing, rejoice and worship, for Ever and Ever.

To Conclude: We are Temples of the Holy Spirit; we are the Children of the Living God; the Children of Light; the Purchase of the Blood of Christ; the Delight of God; and the Care of Angels: Let us not live in Sins like those that have no Knowledge nor Hope.

Grief moderated for the Death of Friends.

Darius, King of Persia, on the Loss of the Queen his Wife, was excessive melancholy and disconsolate, insomuch as the wisest Men of Greece were summoned to present themselves before him, to mitigate his Trouble; but 'twas so far from redressing it, as to him it then appeared like

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the playing on a Lute to the Ears of Tygers and Panthers ; to go about to cure, by Words fitly applied, a Grief which had more of Fury than Mediocrity in it. At length *Democritus*, the Philosopher, (perceiving the Heart of this Monarch by times began to relent, his Mind being tired out with his Tears) promised to raise the Queen again, if the King would furnish him with Things necessary for the Purpose. The King, extreamly rapt up with this Proposal, said, He would therein imploy all the Riches of the World which were at his Disposal : But the Philosopher only demanded of him Three Names of such as had never felt any Grief or Sadness, to engrave on the Queen's Monument ; which could not in any sort be found, after a long Search throughout the whole Kingdom of *Persia*. Then *Democritus*, taking this Opportunity, said, *Alas ! Sir, we may well say, your Diadem of Rubies and Diamonds, so resplendent on your Head, dazle your Eyes, and hinder you from seeing the Miseries of your poor Subjects ; Not to be able, in so great and vast an Empire, to meet with Three Happy Men ! and yet you marvel, tho' born under the Condition of Mortals, that Death is entred your Palace.* This, with many other grave Sayings, the Emperor approved of to his Consolation.

The greatest Evil of Crosses is the Want of Courage. Why do we resist against Heaven, and

censure the Divine Decrees? Is it for a Christian to afflict himself for a Fatal Necessity which indifferently involveth Monarchs? Must God revoke his Laws? Must he create a World a-part, to content Mortals to their Liking? Deceive not yourselves; 'tis much better to go along with the Stream that followeth the great Current of Divine Providence.

'Tis the Part of a Great Mind, to be Temperate in Prosperity, and Resolute in Adversity. That Man only is Happy that draws Good out of Evil, and is unmoved with any External Violence. There is no Evil Immortal for Mortals.

Virtue's Perseverance crowns our Deaths with the Olive-branch of Peace.

S Aith the Prophet David, *Mark the Perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.* Thus a Good Man never dies unprepared, because his Perseverance in Virtue is a Providence against Sudden Death. To a Man well prepared, sudden Death is but a quicker Passage; and is not to be accounted a sudden Death, or a sudden Departure, because it came not unlook'd for.

To the Prophet Ezekiel said God, *Behold, I take away from thee the Pleasure of thine Eyes* (meaning his Wife, in whom he delighted) *with a Stroke suddenly,*

suddenly, and yet thou shalt not weep. Let not the Pleasures of Life allure, nor the Cares thereof possess us; then sudden Death cannot surprize us. If my Life please God, I am sure my Death shall please me; Christ never leaves any of his at parting. It is a great Happiness to die in Ease. That Man's End is easie, whom Death finds with a weak Body and a strong Soul. Yet a Good Man doth not always die in the Exercise of his Virtues; but as a Wise Man, when he sleeps, loseth not his Knowledge, no more doth a Good Man his Graces, tho' they cannot then do their Offices for him. He that can shut his Eyes every Night with a quiet Conscience, shall meet with least Disturbances when Death shall close his Eyes at last; then shall he see more with them shut, than ever he could do with them open. *St. Paul* was stricken blind, that the Eyes of his Spirit might be opened. Yet we may trust to this: Believe aright, and live as you believe, and you cannot but die in Safety. If you would end your Life quietly, render it up willingly: As saith *St. Hierome*, *What dost thou longer here on Earth, O thou my Heavenly-born Soul?* *St. Austin*, in a high Speculation, endeavouring to express this Heavenly Joy, thus determines: *A Man may as well draw in all the Air in the World with a Breath, as express it to the Life; not that there is Want of Words, but Want in Words, to express it.*

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Shortness of Life is no Unhappiness. The Book of Wisdom saith, *He was soon taken away, lest Wickedness should alter his Understanding, or Deceit beguile his Soul.* Also saith the Prophet Ezekiel, *The Righteous are taken away from the Evil to come.* Had the present Life been evil, or long Life good, Cain had been slain, and Abel had survived: But Death commonly begins where God loves best. *His Soul,* saith the Scripture, *pleased God; and therefore hastened he to take him away.* Seldom is Excellence in any kind long-liv'd; we see the best Men live not longest: And indeed it were Injurious to wish that Virtue should hinder any one from Happiness. The Best cannot be Happy, but by Dissolution; their Dying being but a Change, going from Evil to Good. If the Wicked Man lives long, it is but to aggravate his Judgments; if he dies, it is but to hasten them.

As long as we live we must persist in an open Defiance to our Sins, and endeavour to pursue and mortifie our Inclinations to them, and persevere in the Practice of all Virtue; thereby to improve and grow on to Perfection, that so we may die as we have hitherto lived, and consummate in a final Victory for the Crown of Perseverance to Death.

How to imploy our Time, so as Death may never surprize us.

SAith Scipio, *This is the most Honourable Philosophy, to study a Man's Mortality.* Fools would fain do at last, that which Wise Men do at first; Prepare for their End. Thoughtless Men conceive the Seniority of Time at their Command, to do as they please, and when they please. 'Tis certain, Youth and Age are measured by Government, and not by Time it self; if we consider how little Power we have over the Present, less over the Future: Which made David cry out betimes, *Lord, let me know my End, and the Measure of my Days; what it is, and how long I have to live.*

Time it self, which covers all that is past, and discovers all that is to come, hath now had all its Changes: Nature's Time is past; the Law which succeeded is abolished; now is the Gospel's Time, after which there shall be no more Changes.

Change, (the great Master of the World) that hath Time for its Agent, abuseth many with the Hopes of Time. It is true, there is nothing our own but Time, which is a Servant equal to all; it holds its Pace, and flies as fast in Idleness as in Business. He lives in Safety, who watches his Time; but in reckoning of Time, most Men miscast it.

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The Preparation for Death makes a Fruition of Life. No Man ever preserv'd himself from dying, by forgetting Death. Saith Seneca, We ought often to prepare for Death, and will not; at last we die indeed, and would not.

Caspar Borgia, being sick to Death, said, When I lived, I provided for every Thing but Death; but now I must die, I am unprovided for that.

A Constant Preparation becomes a Wise Man's Duty. By deferring it, we presume upon what we have not, and neglect what we have. Therefore prepare for Death's Approach before he comes, since no Man can promise himself of to Morrow.

A Man, saith Luther, lives Forty Years before he knows himself to be a Fool; and by that Time he sees his Folly, his Life is finished. So Men die before they begin to live. Age or Sicknes will make a Man unapt either to compose or dispose himself to die; so that 'tis wast Time to prepare for Death when it is a Burthen to live. Age solicites Death; Youth scoffs it. Our best Health affords but Time good enough for this One thing necessary; therefore let it be our chief Business to make our Calling and Election sure; to redeem the Time that is lost; to pass our Sojourning in Fear, that Sloth may not rob us of our precious Time. For whilst our Minds are honestly imployed, they will not be at Leisure to listen to the Temptations which the Devil and

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Outward Objects do perpetually suggest to us, to obtain Admittance to speak with our Thoughts whilst they are taken up in so good an Employment. And how prosperous soever our Outward Condition may be, in the Intervals of our Religious Duties, that we may not dwell long on the severe Exercise of them, we should find out some Innocent and Honest Business or other, to keep our Activity regularly exercised; there being many Generous, Liberal, and Ingenious Employments, fit for Persons of the highest Rank and Condition: They may dedicate some Portions of their Time to useful Studies; as Philosophy, History, Law, Customs of their own Country, Inspection of their own Estates; to over-look and govern their Families; to examine the Complaints of their Tenants, or the Necessity of their Neighbours; to reconcile Differences, or conciliate Love and good Neighbourhood; to divert themselves from sinful Courses, and render themselves useful to the World. And as for those that, to serve God, neglect their Calling, they are Religious Truants; so they that, to attend their Calling, neglect to serve God, are Prophane Drudges. *Be faithful to Death, saith St. Paul, and I will give you the Crown of Life.*

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Against

Against the Fear of Death, with the sad Consequences of an Evil Life.

WHEN *Orba* and *Cato* had prepared all things for their Death, they settled themselves to sleep: When they awaked, and found themselves upon the Stroke of Execution, all they said, was, *Tyrants have been told to their Faces, That their Mortal Wounds made the Sufferers Immortal.*

The Fear of Death is worse than the Pain of Death; because the Fear of Death kills us often, when Death it self can do it but once. There is nothing more miserable or foolish, than always to Fear. Distrustful Fear and Over-confident Hope are both alike hurtful. The Philosopher thought that if Death (as bad as Men count it) were not mingled with Bitterness, Men would run to it with Desire and Indiscretion. I shall never think my Soul in good Case, so long as I fear to think of dying. When the Prince of Life was under the Arrest of Death, then Death's seeming Victory was terrible; but now, *O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory?*

Fears multiply Evils, Faith diminishes them. Nothing is so painful as to dwell long under the Expectation of some great Evil of our selves. Pains of Death are only Throws of Travail, that bring forth

forth Joys in suffering Pains. Our Lives are full of Evil; therefore Death is no Evil to them that have felt the Smart of this, or hope for the Joys of a better.

When *Anaxagorus* had the News brought him, that his Dear and Only Son was dead, the Son's Condition satisfied the Father's Passion. There is no such gentle Removal of Grief and Discontentment, as the right Sense of Death. A Good Man counts his End the best of his Being, for that brings him to the Fruition of his Hope. Seldom doth he die well that lives ill; therefore, in the Course of your Life, practise what *St. John* adviseth: *Who, soever doth not Righteousness, is not of God; neither he that loveth not his Brother.* This is the only sure Evidence for Heaven; therefore every Sin we commit makes our States doubtful, and fills them with Perplexities and Fears. Men may cheat themselves with vain Hopes and Imaginations when they come to die; but nothing can be a solid Foundation for Peace and Security, but universal Righteousness. To my Apprehension, it is a sad Record which is left by *Athenasius*, concerning *Ninus* the great *Assyrian* Monarch, whose Life and Death is summed up in these Words: *He had an Ocean of Gold, and other Riches more than the Sands in the Caspian Sea: He never offered Sacrifice, nor worshipped the Deity, or administred Justice, nor spoke to his People; but was*

most valiant to eat and drink. This Man is dead; behold his Sepulchre, and now where Ninus is. Sometime I was Ninus that drew the Breath of a living Man, now nothing but Clay: I have nothing but what I did eat, and served my self in my Lusts; that was and is all my Portion: The Wealth with which I was esteemed, blessed my Enemies. I am gone to Hell; when I went thither, I neither carried Gold Horses nor Silver Chariots: I that wore a Mitre am now a Heap of Dust.

This World is the Magazine of all those Temptations by which our Virtue and Innocence is importuned and assaulted: All that we can enjoy in this Life, is only the Convenience or Inconvenience of a short Journey to a long Home, and either our Virtues or Vices, which are the only Goods or Evils, that will accompany us to Eternity.

That the Duty of Life is to prepare for Death.

PLAUTO, when he saw one over-indulgent to his Body by high Feeding, ask'd what he meant by making his Prison so strong? saying, *When you pamper the Flesh, you do but virtual the Enemy.* The Scripture revealeth to us but One Way of preparing for Death, and that is by a Holy Life: Not in Surfeiting and Drunkenness, (saith St. Paul) not in Chambering and Wantonness; but to take heed we be

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not overcharg'd with Surfeiting : And to put on the Armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil. And from thence gives the Reason : For we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive as he hath acted in the Flesh, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.

Those that have most studied Men and History, do observe, that the greatest Men and best Wits, when once they come to find their own Mortality, do then with the strongest Resolutions quit the World, by applying themselves wholly to Devotion ; whereby they may end their Days in Peace. Commonly Good Men are Best at last, even when they are dying ; for they seldom die of a Sin-sickness.

There is no Spectacle in the World so profitable, or more terrible, than to behold a Dying Man, who carries Heaven and Earth wrapp'd up in his Body ; at which Time each Part returns Homeward : O then the Happiness of a well-spent Life ! I shall now, in Hopes of some Part of the Imitation, set before you the Method which St. Ambrose, and St. Austin from his Example, made use of : They divided every Day into Three Parts of Employment, *viz.* Eight Hours they spent in the Necessities of Nature and Recreation : Eight Hours in Charity, and doing Good to Others ; dispatching

ing their Businesses, reconciling their Enmities, re-
 proving their Vices, correcting their Errors, in-
 structing their Ignorance, and transacting the Af-
 fairs of their Dioceses: The other Eight Hours
 they spent in Study and Prayer.

It is a vast Work, which any Man may do if he
 never will be Idle; and 'tis a large Way a Man may
 go in Virtue, if he never goes out of his Way by
 a vicious Habit or a great Crime. And he that
 perpetually reads good Books, if his Parts be an-
 swerable, will have a large Stock of Knowledge:
 It is so in all Things else.

Let us follow the Example of Holy *David*; to
 set God always before us; and to possess our Minds
 with a quick and lively Sense of his being conti-
 nually present with us, wheresoever we are, and
 whatsoever we are about, and that he is a constant
 Witness and Spectator of all our Actions.

We are to fight for our Immortality, for all our
 Hopes of Happiness and Well-being in a Never-
 ending Life: And when so much depends upon
 the Success of our Conflicts for Death Preparative;
 that we must conquer and be crowned, or die;
 win the Field and Heaven, or yield our selves cap-
 tive to Eternal Misery; I leave you to judge, as
 you love your Salvation, and value the dear Price
 of the Blood of the Son of God, who paid the
 Ransom for our Souls to escape Eternal Damna-
 tion,

tion, whether it be not highly necessary for us to stand the Battel.

This Life is only in order to the next; and we are to expect our Reward as we have behaved our selves in this World: For it is only given us to prepare for Immortality and Glory.

Lastly, 'Tis also necessary that we should endeavour, as far as in us lies, to keep a constant Chearfulness of Spirit in our Religion: Not to imagine (as many Superstitious Christians do) that it is an Enemy to Mirth and Chearfulness, and a severe Exacter of Pensive Looks and Solemn Faces; that we must be cloister'd from all Society but our own Melancholy Thoughts: For this is to make our Duty run a-tilt, to render it a great Grievance to our Nature. Saith our Blessed Lord, *My Yoke is easie, and my Burden is light.*

That Death often attacks us in Perfect Health.

SAITH the Prophet David, *My Soul is always in thy Hand, therefore do I not forget thy Commandments.* He looked upon himself as a dying Person, and that restrained all his Inclinations: And so he prayed, *Lord, teach me to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wisdom.* Saith Seneca, *He that is not prepared for Death, shall be perpetually troubled, as well with vain Apprehensions as with real Danger.*

ger. Let us make hast to die, since every Day to a wise Man is a new Life: For he hath done his Business the Day before, and so prepared himself for the next, that if it be not his last, he knows yet that it might have been so.

In the Morning, question whether you may live till Night; and when Night comes, do not too confidently promise your self another Morning: Thus shall you be in a constant Expectation, and in a good Disposition to die. Many are snatched away in an Instant, and die when they are not in the least aware of it: For in such an Hour as we think not, the Son of Man cometh. O how wise, how happy is that Man, who makes it his daily Care to be such whilst he lives as he desires to be found when he comes to die; that he may cherish a good Hope and great Assurance of leaving the World to his Comfort and infinite Advantage!

How many Instances have we before our Eyes, or fresh in our Remembrance, of several being hurried out of their Lives without any Warning at all! Often have we been surprized, first, with the News of this Friend's being run through, another drowned crossing the Water; and of many Hundreds, by a Storm at Sea, losing their Lives suddenly together! One breaks his Neck by a Fall, another in a Moment falls down dead of an Apoplexy, and another is choaked with his Meat; some
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are burnt in their Beds, others murdered by Thieves, or out of Malice; many die struck with Lightning, or Blasting, or Pestilence, or by Earthquakes: Thus vast Variety of Deaths surround us!

Again, Let us consider (Secondly) those many other Persons who are remarked in History to have dy'd suddenly. *Pabius*, surnamed the Painter, was choaked with a Hair in a Mels of Milk; *Anacreon* was killed with a Razor; Cardinal *Colonna* with Figs crufted with Ice; *Adrian* the Fourth with a Fly; *Drusus Pompeius* with a Pear; *Demetrius Afer* with a full Cup; *Casimir*, the Second King of *Polonia*, with a little Draught of Wine; *Armenath* with a full Goblet; *Terquinius Priscus* with a Fish-bone. Every Minute hath a Danger, and therefore a Succession of Actions, in every one of which we may as well perish as escape.

Thirdly, How many Persons have died in Acts of Sport or Merry-meetings! *Grimealdus*, a *Lombard* King, died shooting a Pigeon; *Thales*, the *Milibian*, in a Theatre; *Lucia*, the Sister of *Aurelius* the Emperor, playing with her little Son, was wounded in her Breast with a Needle, of which she died; *Benno*, Bishop of *Adelburg*, with great Ceremony and Joy consecrating *St. Michael's Church*, was crowded to Death by the People; and a great Lawyer, playing with a little Dog, was bit upon his Lip, and he instantly grew mad, and perished.

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Charles

Charles the Eighth of France, seeing a Gentleman playing at Tennis-court, swooned, and never recovered; *Henry the Second* was killed running at Tilts; *Ludovicus Bergha* with riding the Great Horse. How many have died laughing, or in the Exercise of a great Joy at the News of a Victory! *Diagoras*, the Tyrant of *Sicily*, died with Joy at the News of a Victory; as also *Philippides* the Comedian, *Diagoras* of *Rhodes*, and *Chilon* the Philosopher, expired in the Embraces of their Sons crowned with Olympick Laurels; *Marcus Juventius*, when the Senate decreed him Honour. The Emperor *Conrade the Second*, when he triumphed after the Conquest of *Italy*, had Joy too big for his Heart, by which he died. *Philibertian* of *Nice* died with excessive Laughter; so did the Poet *Philemon*, provoked to it only by seeing an Ass eat Figs. Besides, what a Number of Persons have been found dead suddenly in their Beds! Death can enter in at any Door.

O what Cause have we to make our Calling and Election sure, to give all Diligence to work out our Salvation; Holiness of Life and Incorrupted Sanctity being the Condition of our Felicity! When our Hearts are right to God; and with our Wills and Affections we love God and keep his Commandments, then Christ dwells in us; and we in Christ: We shall then have no Affections to Sin, but

but choose Virtue with great Freedom of Spirit and Alacrity; pursue it earnestly, and make it the Business of our Lives. This will make us die considerately and chearfully, upon the Foundations of Virtue.

Let us look for Death in all Places and at all Times. Saith Seneca, *It is a Blessed Thing to dispatch the Business of Life before we die, and then to expect Death in the Possession of a Happy Life.*

The Blessed Sacrament a most requisite Duty in our Preparation for Death.

Saith St. Cyril Alex. *The Sacrament is the Pledge of Glory; and when we have received him who hath overcome Death, and henceforth dies no more, he becomes to us like the Tree of Life in Paradise; and the Consecrated Symbols are like the Seeds of an Eternal Duration, springing up in us to Eternal Life, nourishing our Spirits with Grace, which is but the Prologue and the Infancy of Glory, and differs from it only as a Child from a Man.*

Let this give us a due Sense of the Greatness of the Mystery, and the Excellency of his Mercy in it; and consequently let it fill our Souls with Pure and Holy Affections, with Earnest Longings, with Godly Sorrow, with Sincere and Stedfast Resolutions, that our Hearts may be clean (tho' homely)

Receptacles for our Saviour, such as he will not disdain. 'Tis an Innocent Life, and a Devout Mind, that are the constant Preparations for so pure a Guest; and he whom thou lovest, will go Home with thee to thy House: When thou hast him, thou hast a Treasure which nothing can take from thee; thy Love and Joy, thy Delight and exceeding great Reward, thy perfect and sole Good.

O how great is his Bounty! how sweet is his Mercy! who refresheth his hungry Servants with this delicious Bread from Heaven, that they might eat thereof and not die.

The Holy Sacrament is in Memory of that Death by which we hope for Life, which is the End of Immortality, and the Resurrection of the Body; it unites our Spirits to Christ; it is the great Defensive against the Hostility of the Devil; it is the solemn Prayer of the Church united, and made acceptable by the Sacrifice of Christ, and is exhibited to God; it is the great Instrument of spiritual Increase, and the Growth of Grace; it is Duty and Reward, Food and Physick, Prayer and Thanksgiving; an Union of Mysteries, the Marriage of the Soul, and the Perfection of all the Rites of Christianity.

Dying with the Holy Sacrament in us is a going to God with Christ in our Arms, and interposing him between us and the angry Sentence: But then

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we must be sure we have done all the Duties, (without which we cannot Communicate worthily) or Satan comes in the Place of Christ; for it is a Horror, not less than Infinite, to appear before God's Tribunal possessed in our Souls with the Spirit of Darkness.

The Summons of Death welcome to the Godly.

SAITH St. Austin, *The Bodies of Saints shall be raised with as much Ease as Happiness; Death doth not disannul, but discontinues Life: And by our Rising we are re-admitted to our Better Life, a Life which never dies, a Morning that hath no Evening nor Ending.*

Compare Life with Death, and you will clearly see how Death, which seems to dispossess us of All, puts us in Possession of more than that All. Man's Happy Being is Eternity. The End of Man is better than Man, whose Birth is Sin, whose Life is Folly, and whose Death is Rottenness. But as Opinion is owing to Reason, so is Faith to Religion. When we are turned into Dust, our Lives lie hid with Christ; yet in the Day of Resurrection, by reason of this Mystical Conjunction, Divine and Quickning Virtue shall stream from Christ to his Elect, and cause them to resurge from the Grave to Life Eternal: *For the Head will not be without the Members;*

Members; where he is, there they shall be also.---
 Awake then, and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust; (saith
 the Prophet Isaiah) for thy Dew is as the Dew of
 Herbs, and the Earth shall cast forth her Dead.---
 I know (saith Job) that my Redeemer liveth, and I
 shall see God Face to Face.---- Here we dwell cotta-
 ged in a House of Clay, whose Foundation is Dust;
 but Death brings us to a Habitation made without
 Hands, everlasting in the Heavens; where, for
 Love, we shall be a Son; for Birth-right, an Heir;
 for Dignity, a King; and have Communion with
 Saints, Fellowship with Angels, and the immediate
 Fruition of God and Christ.

Saith St. Austin, Thy Goodness gave us Being; Thy
 Justice punishes our Misdeeds; Thy Mercy spares us
 from the Punishment we deserve. Happy, sure, beyond
 Imagination, is that bless'd Soul, which maketh its
 Escape out of this Earthly Prison, and wings its Way
 to Heaven without any Restraint; which sees its dear-
 est Lord Face to Face, and, no longer enslaved with the
 Fear of Death, triumphs in the Enjoyment of Ever-
 lasting Glory; possessing Thee, the Object of its Love
 and long Pursuit! O Glorious Pomp of Souls return-
 ing from their Toilsome Pilgrimage! O the Happy Com-
 pany of Heavenly Citizens! O the Ravishing Enter-
 tainment of those Harmonious Hymns, the Melody of
 Angels, and Sweet Notes of Songs in Consort, of which
 every Member of the Heavenly Choir bears his Part!

O Life

O Life of Joy! where all Good Things are enjoyed in Perfect Charity; where the Son of Righteousness sheds the Refreshing Beams of his Excellent Beauty upon every Heart; where the Divine Light is so diffused, that every Inhabitant of those Blessed Regions shine by the Reflection! For, being constantly united to the Deity, they are transformed into the Likeness of the Divine Immortality and Perfection. Thus receiving the full Effects of their Holy Lord's Promises: Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold the Glory which thou hast given me:-- That they all may be one, as thou, O Father, art in me; and I in thee; even that they also may be one in us.

In the Name of God, Sirs, what would you have? Is not here Encouragement for a Holy Life, thus to meet with a Happy Death? Will any thing be too hard, but what is absolutely impossible? What tho' you pant and labour while you are climbing the Everlasting Hills, God be praised, 'tis not so far to the Top, but that the pleasant Gales and glorious Prospects you shall everlastingly enjoy there, will abundantly compensate for all the Difficulty of the Ascent. When your Courage begins to sink, lift up your Eyes to the Recompence of Reward, (as saith our Blessed Lord) for your Redemption.

That

That Dying to Sin makes Death Advantageous.
SOME Philosophers have long wrapped up in
 their Contemplations of Death and Immor-
 tality, that they discours'd so familiarly and pleasing-
 ly of it, as if a fair Death were to be preferred be-
 fore a pleasant Life. But Christians must go far-
 ther, and search deeper. They must try where the
 Power of Death lies, which they will soon find;
 for every Man's Death lies in his own Sins. Death
 never hurts a Man, but with his own Weapon;
 it always turns upon us some Sins it finds in us.
 Saith St. Paul, *The Sting of Death is Sin.* Pluck
 out the Sting, and Death cannot hurt you. Let
 a Man often and seriously think of Dying, then let him
 sin if he can, said the Pious Mirandola.
 There is nothing wherein Wisdom is more seen
 than in the temperate Use of Pleasure and Prospe-
 rity. A Man cannot look up to Heaven with one
 Eye, and down to the Earth with another. Hea-
 ven is full of Good Works, Hell full of Good
 Wishes. Saith Plato, *A Man may do ill, but to dis-
 guise it, and defend it, is to out-face Truth.* No Good
 Man was ever thought the more miserable for dying,
 but much more the happier.

When St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers in France,
 went into the East to reprove the Arian Heresie, he
 heard

heard that a young Nobleman treated with his Daughter *Abra* for Marriage: The Bishop wrote to his Daughter, That she should not engage in a Promise, nor shew any Countenance to the Request; because he had provided her a Husband, Fair, Rich, Wise, and Noble, far beyond her present Offer. The Event of which was this: She obeyed; and when her Father returned from his Eastern Triumph to his Western Charge, he prayed to God, That his Daughter might die quickly. God heard his Prayers, and Christ took her into his Bosom till the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. This relates the Advantage of the State of Separation from that of Reprobation.

By dying daily, we shall soon come to God. Faith prevents Time, and makes Things future present. A Pious Man so lives here, as if his Conversation were in Heaven; carrying himself not only Honestly, Civilly, and Humbly, but beyond Natural Comportment: His present Life seems Superhumane, Divine and Spiritual; and so, by leading a Life Heavenly, begins Heaven here. *Blessed is he (saith St. Paul) that hath his Part in the First Resurrection; for the Second Death shall have no Power over him. Saith Plato, Dreadful Death laughs at the Vain Conceits and Precepts of Humane Tranquility. A Wise Man lives but so long as he should, not so long as he can. 'Tis Man's Duty to know the Dignity of his*
* L *Soul,*

Soul, which is so heavenly Ambitious, as it will not let Heaven alone till it may see as it is seen. An Idle Man is never ready to die, and is glad of any Excuse; and a Busy Man hath always something unfinished, and he is ready for every thing but Death.

Fear gives to Death Wings, Spurs, and Darts: Death hastens to a Fearful Man. If therefore you would make Death harmless and slow, to throw off Fear is the Way to do it, and Prayer is the Way to do that.

It was a sad Sight to see the Flower of all France confined to a Physician and a Barber, and the King to be so much their Servant, that he should acknowledge and own his Life from them, and all his Ease, through their gentle Dressing of his Gout, and friendly Medicines. Socrates refreshed the Evil of his Condition, when he was to drink Aconite, thus: *If the Soul be Immortal, and perpetual Rewards be laid up for wise Souls, then I lose nothing by my Death; but if there be not, then I lose nothing by my Opinion: For it supports my Spirit in my Passage, and the Evil of being deceived cannot overtake me when I have no Being.*

That

*That a Well-spent Life is always prepared
for Death.*

SAITH St. Austin, *O that I could see Death, not as it was, but as Thou, Lord, hast made it !* As it hath the Dominion of Sin, it is the greatest Monarch and the ancientest King of the World. *Death hath reigned from Adam to Moses, saith St. Paul, yet at last this King shall be conquered. The last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. O Death ! I will be thy Death, saith Christ.*

Life it self is no true Felicity, but a dying Being, and such a Being as every Day pants for Breath, which Nature fans upon for a while : And since Death is no Death, but a going unto Heaven, and Heaven coming unto us ; How can a Man think any Difficulty too much, any Time too well spent, as to prepare and be always meditating upon Death ?

St. Lewis always wore a Ring with this Motto, *Volo solidum perenne* : All his Intentions aimed at Heaven and Eternity.

Strive not to forget your Time, and suffer none of it to pass unconcerned. Let us suppose what *Dives* would have done if he had been loosed from the Pains of Hell, and permitted to live on Earth One Year ; Would all the Pleasures in the World have kept him One Hour from pursuing Good, and

refusing Evil? No more *Lazarus's* unrelieved at his Door.

Man is only a Wink of Life; his Life and Death are joined as near as Joy and Grief, whose Tears (the Limbeck of the Heart) express both.

I shall now give you a lively Representation of the Picture of the King of Terrors, as may render his Grim Visage and Fearful Addresses so familiar to us, as that our Thoughts may be beforehand accustomed to the Manner of his Approaches. With what an Army of Diseases he is wont to lay siege to the Fort of our Lives; how, in Despite of all the Resistance of Nature, he plants and quarters in our Veins, our Arteries, our Stomachs, or our Bowels, and from thence infests us all over with continual Anguish and Pain! Now when he hath tired and exhausted us with his continued Batteries, and worn out our Strength with a Succession of wearisome Nights and sorrowful Days, he at last storms the Soul out of all the Out-works of Nature, and forces it to retire into the Heart; and now, when he hath marked us for dead with a Baptism of Clammy and Fatal Sweats, he summons our Weeping Friends to assist him to grieve and vex us with their Parting Kisses and Sorrowful Adieus: And now at length, when he is weary of tormenting us any more, he rushes into our Hearts, and with a few Mortal Pains and Convulsions tears
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the Soul from thence, and turns it out to seek its Fortune in the wide World of Spirits; where 'tis either seized by Devils, and carried away to their Dark Prisons of Sorrow and Despair, there to languish out its self in a dismal Expectation of that Dreadful Day, wherein it must change its bad Condition for a worse; or be conducted by Angels to some Blessed Abode, there to remain in unspeakable Pleasure and Tranquility, till 'tis crowned with a Glorious Resurrection.

Pliny called a Short Death the greatest Fortune of a Mortal's Life: For even Good Men have been forced to an Undecency of Department by the Violence of Pain. And *Cicero* observes concerning *Hercules*, that he was broken in Pieces with Pain, even then when he fought for Immortality by his Death. And therefore, as a Sudden Death certainly loses the Reward of a Holy Sickness; so it makes, that a Man should not run so much Hazard, and lose the Reward of a Holy Life.

The Soul's Intrinsic Value consider'd, the Only Motive to Prepare for Death.

S. Aith *St. Austin*, Prosperous Fortune many times hinder a Chearful Dying; but this Petulant World must be left: Conscience of Sin must not be exchanged for the Sense of Pleasure. Every Sense about us, upon
the

the least Temptation is a Traitor to the Soul. The Body it self, if you set too high a Price upon it, will make a cheap Soul. He is an Unhappy Man whose Outside is his Best. The Body, tho' it hath the Honour to be a Companion with the Soul, yet it is but her Drudge. This Immortal Soul would make a Man heavenly proud to contemplate of how Divine a Nature, Quality, and Essence it is, if she be considered in her Essentiality. Saith St. Bernard, Her Amiative Virtue unites her to God, all Virtue else to her. Saith St. Ambrose, She partakes of all the Good which is in God; which the Body doth not, but by Participation with the Soul. Again, saith St. Bernard, And yet this Spiritual Essence of the Soul was therefore clogged with an Earthly Body, that it should not grow Proud, as those Angels did that fell. Let me ever worship the Great God of this Little God, my Soul. Bring my Soul out of Prison, saith the Prophet David, that I may praise Thee.

It is harder to make a true Philosopher more patient of Life than of Death. 'Tis a Wonder to see, saith St. Bernard, how we love the Present, and less esteem the Future. Man must chiefly mind his Soul, the Present is not that which contents her. They are only Creatures of Inferior Natures that are pleased with the Present. Man is a Future Creature; the Eye of his Soul looks beyond this Life, and feels a Desire of Immortality. We fear what

we should wish, and wish what we should fear. But St. Paul says, *'Tis best of all to be loosed, and to be with Christ.* If Death be terrible, yet Innocence is bold. Saith St. Bernard; *Man dying, lives Eternally: And, That this Life were little better than Hell, were it not for the Hopes of Heaven.*

Did not Christ die for us, that we might live with him? Let us not desire to live long from him who would not go out of himself to go to God.

A living Man is subject to a double Death; the one Natural, the other Spiritual: The Natural doth but separate the Body from the Soul, but the Spiritual Death separates the Soul from God. Of all other it is the most desperate State of Life, to live Naturally, and to be dead Spiritually: As saith St. John of the Church of Sardis, *Thou hast a Name that thou livest, but thou art dead.*

It is a good Mind in a Man to be content to die, and willing to live; but to be joyfully willing to die, and content to live, is the Mind of a strong Christian. Let us say with Holy Job, *All the Days of my appointed Time I will wait till my Change come.* Until then, God grant we may finish our Course with Joy; think Life not dear, nor Death grievous: But welcome, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Raptures of Consolation for a Pious Soul to contemplate at the near Approach of Death.

SAITH St. Bernard, *The greatest Honour in a Condition of praising God, is by our Worship and our Imitation. Every Pious, Heavenly-minded Man is an Imitator of God: For a Devout Mind is a House consecrated to his Service, and a Pure Heart is the Altar that sanctifies every Gift.*

Thus a Good Life puts a Man into a secure and perpetual Possession of a Felicity never to be disturbed or taken away. This is a kind of Abreption to Heaven, when a Man abstracts himself from Earth, and by Contemplation grows into an Acquaintance with God; for then he seems to converse with God, and becomes Divine; then he sends forth strong Emanations of Divine Love.

Thus by Divine Rapture we are united to God; for in Rapture we may seem to walk with God as *Enoch* did, talk with God as *Moses* did, see God as *Stephen* did: And because Sight increases Delight, therefore Rapture would fain ascend to Vision; but that is a Privilege for St. *Paul*, of whom St. *Hierome* affirms to have private Conversation with Choirs of Angels. St. *Austin* saith, That Rapture raises in a Man towering Thoughts, irradiates his Soul with high Apprehensions, and so elivates him to God, as

it takes him out of himself to live above himself. The Soul being thus powerfully attracted by the Inducement of so fair and divine Delights, she on her part condescends, and with a willing Assent follows after these Attractions; and, as a Vapour exhaled by the Sun, she goes out of her self, and would willingly draw the Body with her, but that Substance must wait in the Dust to be changed by a glorious Resurrection. This is the State of Love, a Life in God, which giveth a Super-humane Being unto Man, Man being yet on Earth.

Thus did Love perform the Office of Death. *Love is as strong as Death*, saith the Wise Man. Nay, Death only performs by Effect that which Love operateth by Affection. Death did but separate their Bodies from their Souls, but Love separated their Souls from their Bodies living.

In such a Trance History reports St. Basil to say, That Jacob, when he had fast hold on God, let him go for a Blessing: *But my Soul will not let Thee go so; for she now seeks no more Benediction of God, but to enjoy the God of Benedictions.*

Saith St. Hierome, *O my Saviour! did'st Thou die for Love of me? A Love more dolorous than Death, but to me a Death more lovely than Love it self! I cannot live, love Thee, and be longer from Thee.*

When Severinus the Indian Saint was recovering from dying, it is confirm'd he was heard to say,

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O my

O my God ! do not, for Pity, so over-joy me. If I must still live, and have such Consolation, take me to Heaven : For he that hath once tasted Thy Sweetness must necessarily live afterwards in Bitterness.

This Ardent Love engrafting us into God by her uniting Virtue, makes us now to say with the Apostle, My Life is hid in Christ in God ; and with the Prophet David, Return to thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath rewarded thee : --- Who hath delivered my Soul from Death, my Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling. --- Therefore what shall I render unto the Lord for all his Mercies to me ? but to take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. --- Welcome, Lord Jesus ! Come quickly to a Soul that thirsteth for thee.

That GOD's Aweful Presence and his Un-
speakeable Love are the proper Meditations
for Death Preparative.

S Aith Plato, God may well say to us, whose Reli-
gion compels us to believe Him every where pre-
sent : Since the Divine Presence hath made all Places
holy, and every Place hath a Numen in it, even the
Eternal God ; we unhalloow the Place, and defile the
Ground whereon we stand supported by the Arm of God,
placed

placed in his Heart, and enlightned by his Eye, when we sin in so Sacred a Presence.

Keep God constantly in View, and aim at nothing but his Honour; which is but reasonable and just, since he is the First and Perfect Good, the Source from whence all Things flow, the Original of all Good: Dare we then presume to sin against so great Omnipotence? What a Risque do we run? *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?* O let us learn to die daily to Sin and the World, that we may then begin to live with Christ; and not, by our Sins, to trample the Blood of the Son of God under our Feet.

We cannot so much as guess at the Hour or Manner of our own Death, or how soon our Lord may come. Happy therefore is he who keeps the Hour of Death constantly in View: And in order to it, we must endeavour to kindle and blow up the Love of God in our Hearts; we must frequently represent him to our Minds, the infinite Reason we have to love him, pressing our selves with the vast Obligations he hath laid upon us, spreading them fairly before our Thoughts in all their endearing Circumstances: We must ever and anon set our cold and frozen Souls before those melting Flames of his Love and Beauty, never leave chafing at them, urging and pressing them with the Consideration of them, till we feel the heavenly Fire begin

to kindle in our Bosomes. In Him alone is Pleasure, and Bliss, and Glory; the End of all our Wishes, the Fruit of all our Labours, solid Satisfaction and true Happiness. These are the Soul's Contemplations, which fits and composeth our Minds to place all our Affections above; then 'tis that we shall easier welcome the Hour of Death, which, by our frequent Meditations of, will familiarize its Terrors to us; so that whensoever it comes, our Minds, which have been so long accustomed to converse with it, will be much less startled and amazed at it, but more fortified to render it easie, safe, and prosperous.

O! 'tis a serious Thing to die, to pass the Dark Entry of Eternity; through which as we go, right or wrong, we are made or undone for Ever. O! 'tis an Expensive Passage, which we shall never be able to defray, unless we carry along with us a large Stock of Spiritual Preparations; nay, we shall have need of a strong and active Faith; of a Mind well furnished with wise Considerations, of a deep, a large, and tried Repentance; an unstained Charity, a confirmed Patience, a profound Submission to the Will of God, and a well-grounded Hope of a Blessed Eternity: For without all these together, we shall be very ill accoutred to die, and run a dreadful Hazard of miscarrying for Ever.

To improve our Meditations on Death to the best Advantage.

SAith St. Austin, Death had no Interest in Man till Sin had dispossessed him of the Freehold he had in God. For when we are neither Honestly nor Religiously imployed, we shall be perfectly at Leisure to attend any Invitations to Sin; and since we must still be doing one thing or other, our having nothing else to do, will be a strong Inducement to do that which is Evil. As the wise Caro hath observed, By accustoming your selves to do nothing, you will most certainly learn to do ill: For Religious, Lawful and Sinful Objects are the only Companions our Minds have to converse with.

There is not any Man so wicked who with his Good-will would die in his Sins, and yet most Men so live as if they believed Permission were the Article of their Faith all their Life long, and the Article of Remission of Sins were reserved till the Point of Death. It is a strange thing to see that Old Men will not see Death tho' it be before their Faces, nor Young Men tho' it stand at their Backs! Trust not Long Life nor Late Repentance; it is too late when Time is past before you begin. Happy is the Man who improves the Days of his Youth to the Prevention of Evil and doing Good; these are the Watches Christ mentions for his Coming.

A due

A due Preparation for Death requires all the Faculties and Strength of a sound, perfect, and whole Man. We must, whilst we are well, be frequently entertaining our Meditations in the Charnel-house, and read Lectures to our selves upon the Skeletons and Deaths-heads there, those Emblems and Representations of our approaching Mortality.

Alas ! such a slippery and uncertain Thing is this our present Existence, that there is no Part of it we can call our own, but what is Present : For all our Futurity is in God's Hands and Disposal, and how he will shorten or prolong it we are not able to prognosticate ; so that, for ought we know, the next Moment may finally determine our Everlasting Fate ; and the Hopes of Eternity, which are now in our Hands, slip through our Fingers before to Morrow Morning, and leave us desperate for Ever.

I have read, that some Philosophers had their Graves always open before their Gates, that going out and coming in they might always think of Death : For in this Life they found Comforts to be rare, Crosses frequent, Pleasures momentary, Pains permanent.

Seneca says true, *We are born crying, we live laughing, and die sighing.* Which made *Job* cry out, *Man that is born of a Woman is but of few Days, and full of Trouble.*

'Tis

'Tis good to bring our selves acquainted with Death, that when it comes we may entertain it, not as a Foe, but as a Friend ; not as a Stranger, but as a Guest whom we have long looked for ; and bid welcome Death, more blessed than our Birth : In order thereto we must lead a holy Life, in pursuance to our holy Resolutions ; we must set holy Examples before our Eyes, especially that most holy one of our Blessed Saviour ; we must pursue the History of his sacred Life, and diligently observe his Carriage and Demeanor in all those Capacities and Circumstances wherein he was placed, and closely apply it to our selves as a perfect Pattern of our Actions. Thus and thus did my Saviour, and can I follow a more glorious Example ?

To close up this Subject, (as saith the Book of Wisdom) *Though the Righteous be prevented by Death, yet shall he be at Rest ; because he hath made his Peace before-hand.* His Departure is no Misery, for his Hope is full of Eternity.

Idleness the Devil's Agent, which obstructs our Preparation for Death.

Saith Seneca, *In the Case of Pain or Sickness 'tis only the Body that is affected, but the Mind is still at Liberty to hear, learn, teach, advise, and to do other good Offices.* Virtue may shew it self as well
in

in the Bed as in the Field ; and he that chearfully encounters the Terrors of Death and Corporal Anguish, is as great a Man as he that most generously hazards himself in a Battle.

A Disease, 'tis true, bars us of some Pleasures, but procures us others. In Cases of Extremity let us call to mind the most eminent Instances of Patience and Courage, and turn our Thoughts from our Afflictions to the Contemplation of Virtue.

Saith St. Chrysostome, So great was our Saviour's Desire to pay our Ransome, that Himself did assist, by a forward Patience and active Opportunity, towards the Prosecution ; teaching us, that, by an active Zeal and a ready Spirit, we assist the Designs of God's Glory, tho' in our own Sufferings and Secular Infelicities.

He that often considers the dreadful Approaches, the concomitant Terrors, the Consequences of Death, must be strangely stupified if he be not thereby vigorously excited to fore-arm and fortifie himself with all those Graces and Defences that are necessary, not for the present Pain only, but will possess us with Peace of Conscience and Assurance of a happy Life for the future, when we have conquered the Difficulties we contend with.

This is the Temper of Mind that speaks a Man happy ; and he that is truly composed will stand all Shocks of Violence and Disasters, and content himself with his Load in a chearful and quiet Resignation

don to the Appointment of God; to take up the Cross too, and to follow his Saviour through a dark Lane of Sufferings and Persecutions.

There is no State, no Accident, no Circumstance of our Life but what hath been soured by some sad Instances of dying Friends; (which I have deeply experienc'd.) Death meets us every where; we have no Stay here, being People but of a few Days Abode. The Business and important Affairs of most Men steal all their Time, and they are restless in a foolish Motion: So when we give the Devil the Opportunity of an idle Hour, we do thereby tempt him to tempt us, and importunately invite him to steal away the Treasure of our Innocency, by putting the Key of it into his Hands, and giving him a free Access to it. Idleness and every Vice is as much of Death as a long Disease; and *she that lives in Pleasure is dead whilst she liveth*, saith the Apostle: For every sensual Pleasure, and every Day of Idleness and useless Living, lops off a Branch from our short Life. Saith Seneca, *When we spend in Waste what God hath given us in Plenty, when we sacrifice our Youth to Folly, our Manhood to Lust and Rage, our Old Age to Covetousness and Irreligion; designing that Time to Virtue, which indeed is infirm to every thing, and profitable to nothing; then we make our Lives short.*

To conclude: For the better Improvement of our Time for Death Preparation, take the Counsel of St. Hierome to his Friend. *Be always doing one Good Work or other, that so the Devil may always find thee busy.*

That it is Wisdom in us to prepare for Death.

Saith Seneca. It is Philosophy that gives us a Veneration for God, and Charity for our Neighbour; that teaches us our Duty to Heaven, and exhorts us to an Agreement one with another: It unmasketh Things that are terrible to us, assuages our Lusts, refutes our Errors, refrains our Luxury, represses our Avarice, and marks strangely upon tender Natures.

A generous Mind will think no Means too hard which tend to noble and worthy Ends. Certainly the Excellency of the End we pursue would make us despise all Difficulties in the Way to it, since the Captain of our Salvation hath crown'd our Sufferings for his Name's sake with everlasting Joy and Pleasures; as saith the Apostle. *If you suffer with him, ye shall also reign with him; if you deny him, he will also deny you in the Glory of his Kingdom.*

Consider the ravishing Fruition of a Boundless Good after a few Years of Labour, Pains, Disappointments, and Conflicts; after our striving with our Inclinations in the Difficulties of Religion, by

Watch-

Watchfulness in earnest Prayer, and severe Reflections on our selves; when we are assured beforehand, by our Blessed Lord and his Apostle, *that if we love our Fruit unto Holiness, our End shall be everlasting Life*; and we shall be carried by Angels in Triumph to Heaven. For Shame! would we have Heaven drop down into our Mouths, and not be put to the Trouble of reaching and climbing after it! Would we have the God of Heaven thrust his Favours upon us while we scorn and despise them, and prostrate his Heaven to a Company of Drones that do not think it worth their while to go out of their Hives to gather it? O, profound Wretches! look up once more to Heaven, and consider again what it is to dwell with God, and Angels, and Saints, in Glory everlasting.

Let these Considerations be deeply weighed; let us wrestle with Flesh and Blood for so glorious a Prize. Death will always remind us of his Approach; let us prepare for him, by taking Care all our Lives to please God by a holy Life, whereby we may be able to give a good Account of our Lives and of the Improvement of our Talents; which he that mispends his Time, when he comes to die, can never do, and all his other Preparations are little worth.

A short Meditation on Death.

S Aith Seneca, If Death be necessary, why should any Man fear it? And if the Time of it be uncertain, why should we not always expect it, and prepare our selves by a Virtuous Life?

There is not an Hour we live that doth not mind us of our Mortality. We live as if we should never die, without any Thoughts of Frailty; when this very Moment we bestow upon Vanities, or in Vices, may be our last. Why should we wonder to have that befall us to Day which might have happened to us any Minute since we were born? Let us make hast to live, since every Day to a wise Man is a new Life. What a Shame and Misery is it, to be laying new Foundations of Life at our last Gasps! God dresses us for Heaven, in that he loves us struggling with a Disease, resisting the Devil, exercising our Virtues, contesting against the Weaknesses of Nature and against Hope; believing in Hope, and resigning our selves to his Will, as *knowing all Things shall work together for the best, to them that love God.*

*The Advantage of Patience in our Preparation
for Death, and how Prejudicial Impatience
is thereto.*

SAITH *Job* to the Almighty, *Though Thou kill me,*
yet will I trust in Thee; for whose Patience
God hath crowned the Memory of him with a
Wreath of Glory, because he trusted in him, and
sat upon his Dunghil wisely and temperately;
and his Potsherd and his Groans, mingled with
Praises and Justifications of God, pleased him like
an Anthem sung by Angels in the Morning of the
Resurrection.

We easily talk of putting Trust in God for Life:
when we are in Health, for Provision when we have
for Revenues, and for Deliverances when we are
newly escaped: But let us come to sit upon the
Margent of our Graves; let our Enemies lean hard
upon our Fortunes, and dwell upon our Wrongs;
let the Storm arise, and the Keels toss till the Cor-
dage crack, or that all our Hopes bulge under us,
and descend into the Hollownes of sad Misfor-
tunes, when you neither hear, nor see, nor feel any
thing but Objections: This is the proper Work of
Affliction; Faith is then brought into the Theatre,
and so exercised.

Certainly

Certainly God could not choose but be pleased with the delicious Accents of Martyrs, when in their Torments they cried out nothing but *Holy Jesus and Blessed be God*. They that heartily resign to the Divine Pleasure, and can delight in God's Severe Dispensation, will have the Transportations of Cherubins when they enter into the Joys of God. If God be delicious to his Servants when he smites them, he will be nothing but Raptures and Ecstasies to their Spirits when he refreshes them with the Over-flowings of Joys in the Day of Recompence. *Which Lysimachus threatened Theodorus to kill him, he told him, That was no great Matter to do, and he could do no more than the Cantharides could, and a little Fly could do as much.* When God sends his Angel to us with a Sword of Death, let us look upon it as an Act of Mercy, to prevent many Sins and many Calamities of a longer Life; for nothing is to be esteemed Evil which God and Nature hath sent with Eternal Satisfaction. It is the Law of God, it is the Punishment of our Sins, and it is the Confutation of our Natures. Let us be patient in our Bed of Sickness and Calamities, and to try us like Gold in the Furnace of Adversity, to be the more refined for our better Change, as what the Scripture exhorts us to: *My Son, despise not the Chastisement of the Lord, neither*

neither faint thou when thou art corrected by him: For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, even every Son whom he receiveth. Again, Let us submit to all the Instances of Divine Providence; not repining at what God hath allotted for us as a Punishment of our Deservings, or an Instrument of Virtue.

Let our Charity out-live us, that we may rejoice in the Mansions of Rest; because by our Means many living Persons are raised or advantaged.

Lastly, With Thankfulness let us endure all our Pains and Crosses; it may be that these are the last Instances and the last Opportunity that ever God will give us to exercise any Virtue to do him any Service, or our selves any Advantage.

That the Calamities of this Life help to sweeten the bitter Cup of Death.

S Aith Seneca, Virtue is the Work of Industry and Labour, and certainly 'tis worth while to purchase that Good which brings all others along with it.

This World is a Place of Sorrows and Tears, of great Evils and constant Calamities. Saith the Scriptures, *O Death, how welcome art thou to the Afflicted!* Great are the Groans of a Man in a Fit of the Stone, or under the Distraction of a Troubled Conscience; yet worse are the Groans of a Merry, Careless Sinner. Let us again reflect: How many

many Men and Women at this Time lie fainting and dying for Want of Bread! how many are hewn down by the Sword of War! how many poor Orphans are now weeping over the Graves of their Fathers, being destitute of Subsistence! Did we hear the Mariners and Passengers at this Present in a Storm, striking because their Keel dashes against a Rock; Others that weep with Want, and are mad with Oppression, or are desperate by too quick a Sense of a constant Intemperance; in all Reason we should be glad to be out of the Noise and Participation of so many Evils. Thus the Calamities of this Life help to sweeten the bitter Cup of Death. Yet should a Good Man be happy within himself, and independent upon Fortune?

Saith St. Bernard, *O! who can conceive that Horror and Confusion of Thought, when the Flesh is just upon the Brink of Dissolution, and all the Friends and Comforts of this World forsake him, which shall seize the Sinner upon the Approach of that State which he is now entering into, and knows that it shall never have an End.*

He that is perfectly wise is perfectly happy; nay, *The Beginning of Wisdom (saith Solomon) is the Fear of God; and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* A Man had need have a quiet and disintangled Life who comes to search into all his Actions; and therefore every Night we must make our Bed the Memorial

mortal of our Grave, and let our Evening-Thoughts be an Image of the Day of Judgment.

Saith St. Hierome, *Whosoever goes about to comfort a Vicious Person when he lies sick upon his Bed, can only discourse of the Necessity of Nature, of the Unavoidableness of the Suffering, of the accidental Vexations, and encrease of Torments by Impatience, which can only make him to observe decent Gestures in his Sickness, and to converse with his Friends and Standers-by, to comfort and ease their Funeral Complaints, but do him no true Advantages.*

God sends his Servants Sickness with Designs of Mercy; to preserve their Innocence, to overcome Temptations, to try their Virtue, to fit them for Rewards. It is certain, Sickness never is an Evil, but by our own Faults; and if we will do our Duty, we shall be sure to turn it into a Blessing.

None but suffering, humble, and patient Persons can go to Heaven; and God hath given us the whole Stage of our Life to exercise all the active Virtues of Religion, for Patience, for Christian Fortitude, or Conformity to the Divine Will.

Lastly, If we had seen St. Polycarp burning to Death, St. Laurence roasted upon his Gridiron, St. Ignatius exposed to Lions, St. Sebastian pierced with Arrows, and St. Attalus carried about the Theatre with Scorn unto his Death, for the Cause of Jesus, for Religion, for God and a holy Con-
 * O science,

science, Two should have been in love with Suffering.

A Pressing Motive for a Wise Man to Prepare for Death.

ST. Austin, with his Mother Monica, was led one Day by a Roman Prætor to see the Tomb of Cæsar. Himself thus describes the Corps: It looked of a blue Mold, the Bone of the Nose laid bare, the Flesh of the Nether Lip quite fallen off, his Mouth full of Worms, and in his Eye-pits Two hungry Toads feasting upon the remaining Portion of Flesh and Moisture; and so he dwelt in his House of Darknes.

Here is Matter sufficient for our Meditation, and so to live, that we persist in open Defiance to our Sins, and endeavour to pursue and mortifie our Inclinations to them; and persevere in the Practise of all Virtue, to improve and grow on to Perfection; that so, we may die, as we have hitherto lived, in a final Victory; that when our Lord shall come, or send his Herald Death to summons us off from the Field, we may be found fighting, under his Banner, against Sin, the World, and the Devil; never to lay down our Arms till we lay down our Lives.

But then we must still keep a jealous Eye upon the Weakness and Inconstancy of our own Nature, that we have not a fond Opinion that we are good enough

enough already; for that stints our Progress in Religion to any determinate Degree or Measure of Goodness: But that we frequently entertain ourselves with the Prospect of our Mortality, to compose ourselves before-hand into a good Posture of dying. In order thereto, we should be wondrous careful to discharge our Consciences of all the Reliques and Remains of our past Guilt, and with Care redeem the Time we have formerly spent in sinful Courses, by a double Diligence in the Exercise of all the contrary Vices, and doing all the contrary Good we are able.

When a Man stands perpetually at the Door of Eternity, as did *John* the Almoner, every Day is a building of his Sepulchre, and every Night he may say, One Day of my Life is gone and passed into the Possession of Death. All the Pleasures of the whole World cannot make recompence for one Hour's Torment in Hell.

The Use that wise Men have made, when they reduced this Consideration into Practice, is, To believe every Day to be the last of their Life; for so it may be, and for ought we know it will: And then think what you would avoid, or what you would do, if you were dying, or were to Day to suffer Death by Sentence and Conviction: For this is the Sublimity of Wisdom, to do those Things living which are to be desired and chosen by dying

Persons. *An Alarm of Death*, every Day presented and pressed earnestly, (saith *Cicero*) will make a Man so tame and soft, that the Precepts of Religion will dwell deep in his Spirit. Men too to begeth and draw souls to The Egyptians used to serve up a Skeleton to their Feasts, that the Dissolutions and Vapours of Wine might be restrained, and the Vanities of their Eyes chastised by that sad Object. For they thought it unlikely a Man should be transformed far with any thing low or vicious, that looked long or often into the hollow Eye-pits of a Death's Head, or dwelt in a Charnel-house. And such Considerations make all Opportunities and Violence of Sensual Pleasures to be despised. *And yet* as *Cicero* saith, *we may* *vanish in the night*, and every Night we may *die*. *A Meditation on Death*, to remind us of our *Latter End*.

S Aith St. Bernard, God speaks to us and we to him in a Psalm; and yet so great is our Stupidity, that we often repeat the Words without ever regarding the Subject and the Sense, the Author or the Design of it. Therefore the Prophet David so often in his Psalms inculcates the Praises of God: Give unto the Lord the Honour due unto his Name; worship the Lord with a holy Worship. What an amazing Thing is this! the more we attend to it, the more we shall find our selves lost in Wonder. Which we read, or speak,

Speak, or write of God, the great Creator of the Universe, let it be with awful Astonishment and profound Humility; let our Minds enlarge our Thoughts, and take a nobler Range; let them leave all created Objects behind, and run, and mount, and fly aloft, taking Faith to the Assistance of our Reason.

O what ravishing Words are these of our Blessed Saviour's! Come then, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you. And fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's Pleasure to give you the Kingdom. A Man (saith St. Chrysostome), would dwell in this Contemplation, and be loth to come out of it. Nay, (saith St. Austin) a Man might age himself in it, and sooner grow old than weary.

Dying Words are weightiest, and make deepest Impressions; yet our last Thoughts are readiest to spend themselves upon somewhat we loved best whilst we liv'd. If Reflections on our Latter End were then our Wisdom, and most Customary, how happy must our Death be, if we be truly penitent, and our last Speeches the Breathings of devout Contemplation!

Sickness tries our Virtues, and a Sudden Death is free from Temptations. Sickness may be more glorious, and a Sudden Death more safe. A Resolving to Repent upon our Death-bed is the greatest Mockery of God in the World, and the most perfect

perfect Contradictory to all his excellent Designs of Mercy and Holiness: For therefore Hell is threatened if we do not, and Heaven promised upon our living a Holy Life. *As St. Augustine saith, We are only to be curious of our Duty, and confident of the Article of Remission of Sins: And the Conclusion of these Premises will be, That we shall be full of Hope of a prosperous Resurrection. Our Fears and Tremblings are no Instances of our Calamity, but Parts of our Duty. We shall sure enough be washed to the Shoar, altho' we be tossed with the Wind of our Sights and the Unrenewedness of our Fears, and the Ebblings and Flowings of our Passions, if we sail in a right Channel, and steer by a perfect Compass, and look up to God, and call for his Help, and do our own Endeavours.* *It was a Saying of St. Hierome, What dost thou longer here on Earth, O thou my Heaven-born Soul? 'Tis not the happy Death, but the happy Life, that makes Man happy. Entertain thy last Hours with such like Thoughts, as will angelize thy Body and amparadise thy Soul before thou enter'st into Heaven; yield a Sweetness beyond the Bitterness of Death.* *St. Chrysostome asks, To what Purpose is it that thou singest, Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, if thou do'st not believe thy Friend to be in Rest? And if thou do'st, why do'st weep impertinently and unreasonably? Nothing but our own Loss can wisely be*

be deplored; and he that is passionate for his Money's Loss, on his Advantage, we esteem foolish and imperfect.

Of Death: And to prove the Madness of neglecting the Immortal Soul by indulging a Body Mortal.

SAITH St. Bernard, *What a Folly, what an Indignity is it, to despise thy Soul, as if it were nothing worth, and give thy Flesh the Preference in thy Care and Esteem! To make the Mistress serve, and put the Government into the Maid's Hand, is highly unjust and absurd.*

God, it is plain, took other Measures: He did not think fit to lay down his Life for all the Things of this World, tho' he did it for the Soul of Man; so that the Soul is manifestly of higher Value (as said our Blessed Lord) than all the World, since it could not be redeemed at a lower Price than the Blood of Christ himself. And art thou, O vain Man! so lavish, so inconsiderate, not worthy the Name of a Christian, to squander it away for no Compensation at all? And was it not for this that the Son of God, who lay in the Bosom of his Father, came down from his Throne in Heaven to rescue it out of the Power and Usurpation of the Devil?

Devil: Be sensible, O Christian! how noble a Soul thou hast, and how mortal those Wounds were, nay, unto Eternal Death, or the Son of God (saith St. Bernard) *had never died for thy Cure.* Do not therefore think any Sufferings of thy Soul a Matter unworthy thy most serious Regard: Thy God shed Tears of Compassion for thy Soul; then do not think much to wash (with the Prophet David) thy Couch Day and Night with Tears of Repentance and holy Contrition: He poured out his Blood on the Cross for thy sake; do thou spend thine in a daily Crucifixion of thy Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts. Then welcome Death; for thy Soul shall be glorious at its Return to God, provided due Preparation for Death and thy utmost Endeavours be applied for its Removal out of the Body, pure of Sin, and purged by Repentance from the Pollution which it contracted by conversing in the midst of a naughty and miserable World.

The Good of Life does not consist in the Length or Space, but in the Use of it, that we may fortify our selves against Death and inevitable Necessities. It is not at Sea only that Life and Death are within few Inches one of another, but they are as near every where else to, only we do not take so much Notice of it.

I shall conclude with a Saying of *Seneca's*: *There is not any Duty to which Providence has not annexed a Blessing;*

Blessing ; nor any Institution of Heaven which even in this Life we may not be the better for ; nor any Temptation, either of Fortune, or of Appetite, that is not subject to our Reason ; nor any Passion, or Affliction, for which Virtue has not provided a Remedy. 'Tis Philosophy that must bring us to the Contempt of Death, which is the Remedy of all Diseases. No Man takes Care to live well, but long : When yet it is in every Body's Power to do the Former, and in no Man's to do the Latter.

Fervent Prayer, the Soul's Antipast in Life ; at Death, her Refreshing Cordial to the Last Gasps.

SAith St. Gregory, *When we pray to God, if the Cares of the World intervene, they check our Desires into an Indifferency, and suppress the Flame into Smoak, and strangle the Spirits.*

Prayer is a peculiar Preparation for a Holy Life and a Happy Death. But as actual Attention to our Prayers is also necessary, not only to avoid Sin, but that the present Prayer become effectual ; so that Prayer perishes to which the Man gives no Degree of actual Attention : For the Prayer is as if it were not ; it is no more than a Dream, or an Act of Custom and Order, nothing of Devotion,
* P and

and so accidentally becomes a Sin by taking God's Name in vain.

For our more holier Dying, we must believe it to be a very great Evil, both in the Manner of Prudence and Piety, that we should fear the Minister as we fear the Embalmer, or the Sexton's Spade; and love not to converse with him, unless we can converse with no Man else; and think his Office so much to relate to the other World, that he is not to be treated with while we hope to live in this. The sad Experience of this many have often known. In such Delay the Man dies, or his extream Sickness hath made his Reason useless, and he is laid to sleep, and his Life is in the Confines of the Grave, so that he can do nothing towards the trimming his Lamp.

Every good Man ought to be suspicious of himself; and in his Judgment, concerning his own Condition, to fear the worst, that he may provide the better. We are commanded to *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. This Precept was given with very great Reason, considering the Thousand thousand ways of miscarrying. History records, That St. Paul himself, and St. Arsenius, and divers other remarkable Saints, had at some times great Apprehensions of the Danger of failing of the mighty Prize of their high Calling.

Death

Death is that Harbour whither God hath designed every one, that they may find Rest from the Troubles of the World. Long Life (which most covet) hath prov'd their greatest Grief. Did not *Priamus* weep often? And happy had it been if he had died when his Sons were living, and his Kingdom safe, and Houses full, and his City unburnt. It was a long Life that made him miserable, and an early Death only could have secured his Fortune. Saith *Lucian*, *It happeneth many times that Persons of a fair Life and Reputation, of a good Fortune and an honourable Name; are tempted to Folly and Vanity, fall under the Disgrace of Dotage, or into an unfortunate Marriage, or besot themselves with drinking, or out-live their Fortunes, or become tedious to their Friends, or are afflicted with lingering and vexatious Diseases, or live to see their excellent Parts buried, and cannot understand the wise Discourses and Production of their younger Years. In all these Cases, and infinite more, do not all the World say, that it had been better this Man had died sooner?*

He that hath done all his Business, and is begotten to a Glorious Hope by the Seed of an Immortal Spirit, can never die too soon, nor live too long.

As I began so I shall end with Prayer, which speaks to God when the Tongue is stiffened with the Approachings of Death: Prayer can dwell in the

Heart, and be signified by the Hand, or by the Eye, by a Thought or a Groan: Prayer, of all Actions of Religion, is the last alive, and it serves God without Circumstances and Exercises material to the last Breath.

The Undeniable Reason for a speedy Reformation of our Lives, whereby our Happy Death gives Joy to Heaven.

SAITH St. Bernard, *This is sure, that the heavenly Powers have a very tender Regard for their Fellow Citizens upon Earth; and being all ministring Spirits, sent out to administer for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation, we have no Cause to doubt that they are very solicitously concerned for the Good of their Charge; that they conceive a sensible Joy at it; that they strengthen, instruct, protect, and take all the Care they can of them, in order to obtaining it. Let this Consideration so quicken our Pace, and hold out to the last, that when Death summons us we may be those wise Virgins that are provided with Oil in our Lamps to meet the sweet Bridegroom of our Souls. O happy Hour to a true Penitent, that hath all her Life fought him whom her Soul loved, and now hath found him! O Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory! But, O Sinner! what Favour canst thou expect*

expect at the Day of Death, who hath thus disappointed all Heaven of a Joy so greatly desired, and which thou once hadst given so promising Hopes of? The Angels triumphed in our serious Application to Goodness and Religious Duties, as over Men whom they saw plucked back from the very Brink of Hell. Saith St. Bernard, *O the Heart-breaking, the Grief and Amazement, the Howling and doleful Lamentation of that dismal Day, when the Wicked shall be severed from the Conversation of the Saints, and be ever banished the Sight and Presence of God.*

Now is the Time to prevent our Destruction, and this Life the only Time of preparing for Death; now our holy Labours will turn to good Account, our pious Mourning move Compassion, our Prayers and Groans enter the Ears of God, and melt him into Mercy.

O then the happy Reverse of their Griefs and Sufferings, which the Righteous shall find in that Day, when they shall stand full of Hope and humble Confidence before the Judgment-seat; to whom these ravishing Words are pronounced by Christ himself, *Come ye blessed of my Father! &c.*

That

*That as there is no real Pleasure in this World,
so Adversity well improv'd fitteth us best for
Death.*

SAith *Seneca*, No Man is more miserable than he that hath no Adversity; that Man is not tried whether he be Good or Bad. It was the Fire that did Honour to *Mutius Stavola*, Poverty made *Fabritius* famous, *Rutilius* was made excellent by Banishment, *Regalis* by Torments, *Socrates* by Poison, *Cato* by his Death. Consider the Apostles who went away from their Persecutors, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Sake of Christ. Saith *St. Paul*, All that will live godly in Christ, must suffer Persecution; which brings Glory to our Master, Joy to Saints and Angels, and Benefit to our Brethren; who shall observe, and be encouraged by our Stedfastness, and Patience, and holy Perseverance.

Suffering and Dying are not only necessary Incumbrances upon us, but the best and most authentick Instances of our Virtue and Obedience. Saith *St. Austin*, No Man can have Pleasure in both Worlds, neither can a Man-rejoice here and hereafter too; but of Necessity he must forgoe the One that would have the Other. When I consider these Things, (saith he) O Lord, my Comforter, my Soul refuseth Comfort
in

in this Life, that it may be meet for thine Endless Comforts : For which no Man is qualified, till he be first purified in the Furnace of Adversity.

*Of True Repentance, with the Benefit of it
at the Hour of Death.*

SAITH St. Austin, They that are True Penitents will reinforce all their Industry, and double their Studies, and observe more diligently, and watch more carefully, and redeem the Time, and make amends for all their Omissions, and oppose a Good to a former Evil, besides the Duty of the present Imployment ; and then commonly the Life of a Holy Penitent is more holy, active, zealous, and impatient of Vice, and more repacious of Virtue and holy Actions, and arises to a greater Degree of Sanctity than the even and moderate Affections of Just Persons. As our Blessed Saviour's Expression is, *They need no Repentance* ; that is, no Change of State, nothing but a Perseverance and Improvement of Degrees : For where Sin hath abounded, there doth Grace superabound ; and that makes Joy in Heaven.

O God ! we may well perceive our Night hastening on apace ; our Sun draws low, the Shadows lengthen, Vapours rise, and the Air begins to darken : Let us bestir our selves for the Time, let

us

MEMENTO MORI: &c. F

us lose none of our few Hours; let us work hard
a while, because we shall soon rest Everlastingly.

A short Ejaculation, or Hymn, Preparatory for Death.

O LORD! my Days pass swift away,
And Death draws very near;
For which let me prepared be,
Each Moment I live here.

Take off my Eyes from Vanity,
And let my Thoughts be free
From Worldly Cares, that Thou alone
My Only Object be:

Whom I may serve with Love and Fear;
That when my Race is run,
I may enjoy Eternal Rest,
Thro' Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.

